



YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Stay connected with YES and get the inside scoop on our students and staff!

Passing the Torch: YES Welcomes New Program Director

By: Denise Jones

I met destiny face-to-face. I could no longer resist, run, or hide. All I could do is answer. I knew it was my *time*.

When I finally decided to pursue my doctoral studies, I told Dr. Jones I would only “transition” as YES’ Program

Director if we found someone with unwavering passion, undying zeal, and a genuine heart for the work, our students, and the communities we serve. He agreed. We commissioned our stakeholders and commenced our search with this vision.

After reviewing nearly 200 applications, we interviewed only a handful of candidates. However, the applicant we settled on was no longer available for the position.

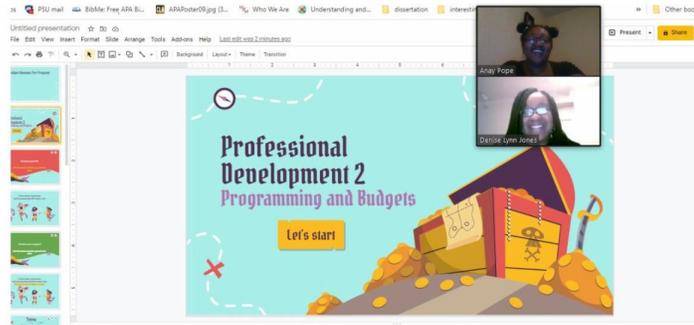
We were devastated. *What were we to do?* I was leaving for school in less than a month and YES was still without a new Program Director.

We gave up. We stopped searching and began enacting our contingency plan. But, just as destiny met me, it also met YES.

On the Friday before my last physical week at YES, I received an email from a prospective Program Director applicant. As I began perusing their application materials, my heart was overcome with joy. Every credential, former experience, and written word spoke to me. *Is this too good to be true?* I wondered. I immediately alerted Dr. Jones and our hiring team. We reviewed their credentials and materials and knew they were the one!

Although the process of receiving our destiny match does not make sense, Anay Pope came to us at the right time and season, and we could not be happier with her as our new Program Director. In fact, there is no one else we would rather have in this position. We are so excited to welcome her to the YES Family and for our partners and stakeholders like you to meet her. While words cannot fully encapsulate the depth and breadth of Anay, I attempt to “introduce” her below.

Anay joins YES with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and passion for serving youth and families. She is a creative thinker, an accomplished researcher, transformative professional, social justice advocate, continuous learner, community-engaged practitioner, and courageous leader. A Braddock native, Anay has an MS.Ed in Higher Education from Pennsylvania State University and a BS.Ed in Early Childhood Education, with an emphasis in Special Education, Urban Education, and Educational Psychology from Indiana University. As a former teacher, scholar, case director, and program and curriculum designer, she brings a unique set of skills and perspective that will advance YES’ programs and help fulfill its mission.



And beyond her accolades and expertise, Anay is just a really great person with an admirable smile, witty personality, a loving heart, and open arms.

While I have enjoyed serving as YES' Program Director for four years, I confidently pass the torch to Anay and trust that she, too, will find her footing and take YES to greater heights and to bigger tables. She is adept at innovating programming and equipped for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead! Ultimately, she is prepared for this moment and the right one to answer the call.

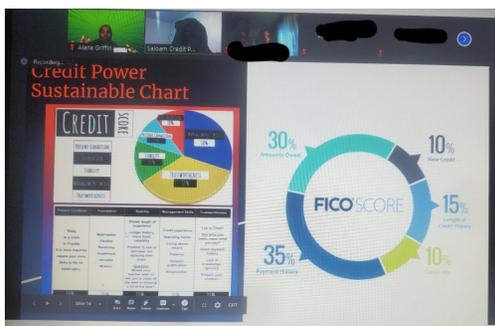
To learn more about Anay, please watch her interview and explore [her bio](#) further. Please also connect with Anay via email at apope@yespgh.org, as she would love to hear from you.

P.S. And don't think I am going *far!* I am transitioning into the role of YES' Legacy Liaison. In this position, I will continue fulfilling YES' mission and shepherding its legacy. Let's stay in touch!

Much love, from one Program Director to the next.

Denise J. Jones

YES' Pathways to Access Program Launches 2020-21 Events



YES' Pathways to Access Program (PAP) hosted its Welcome Event and Financial Literacy Workshop this month with new and returning youth! While programming looks different, students remain excited about developing workforce skills and building community with their peers. In addition to the Welcome Event, students participated in a Financial Literacy Workshop facilitated by the talented and extraordinary founder/CEO of Credit Power LL's Credit Education & Repair Group, Saloam Bey.

In this session, students were provided with important insights regarding credit, budgeting, and financial responsibility. Students were actively engaged, asking tough questions, and soaking up all the hidden gems. To learn more about PAP, please [click here](#).

YES Implements New Mentoring Initiative

COVID-19 has shifted our lives in many ways. With virtual learning becoming prominent, it is ever more essential to prepare youth for virtual learning adaptation. Youth Enrichment Services' new Virtual Mentor Initiative (VMI) is a unique opportunity geared towards guiding students through the virtual learning transition. A priority of the initiative is navigating virtual learning challenges as a team, with the goal of increasing students' virtual learning competency and engagement. Beyond this goal is the opportunity for youth to connect with near-peer mentors, YES' college students. The ultimate goal is for YES' college mentors to lead the way in creating a long-term model for connecting with young people virtually. Stay tuned for more program updates.

YES' Former Program Director Speaks at Alma Mater

Denise Jones, YES' former Program Director, was invited to present, "Stretching Your

Degree and Resisting Prescription: Defining Your Own Path and Taking the Road Less Traveled,” at her alma mater, Allegheny College, last week. In her conversation, she addressed her experiences as one of the only black female Economics students at her undergraduate institution and how she cultivated relationships that assisted her in pursuing meaningful grassroots, community-facing work. She discussed how she utilized her Economics Degree in the classroom and at YES and why students should “resist” prescriptive career routes and think more openly and creatively about connecting their academic training to their passions and purpose. She ended her presentation by sharing the importance of doing the necessary and “unglorified” work. Congratulations, Denise, for this honor. You can check out her presentation by clicking [this link](#).

Stretching your Degree and Resisting Prescription:
Defining your Own Path and Taking the Road Less Travelled



Denise Jones ('13), PhD Student, University of Michigan
Allegheny College | Womxn in Economics | October 14, 2020

YES Presents at the American Public Health Association (APHA)

Black Boys' Health Matters:

Lessons learned from a community-based male mentoring program
Dennis F. Jones¹, PhD; Denise Jones², MA; Lori McLaughlin-Crawford³, MA
¹West Virginia University, ²University of Michigan, ³Youth Enrichment Services
Annual Symposium | October 2020



YES presented three research projects at the 2020 American Public Health Association Conference this month. One project explored how YES' Female Empowerment Wellness Initiative (FeWi) participants define and understand health, the second project examined lessons learned from implementing YES' Voices to Men male mentoring program. The final presentation reported on YES' efforts to develop culturally relevant food distribution

practices informed by young people. The presentations were well received and supported. Check out the presentations [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support!

Visit our Website

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