



Please support funding for Solar Youth!

Solar Youth promotes Youth Empowerment through Environmental Exploration & Leadership!

SOLAR YOUTH'S MISSION, developed by founding youth and adults, is to provide opportunities for young people to develop a **positive sense of self** and **connection and commitment to others** through programs that incorporate **environmental exploration, leadership development** and **community service**.

In order to have a truly transformational impact on the lives of the youth we serve – the most at-risk in New Haven – Solar Youth has created a menu of programs called the **“Cycle of Stewardship”** for youth ages 4-19 that are designed to allow youth to progressively build on their experiences over time, gaining **critical personal and social competencies** and **professional skills** and **servicing as stewards to their communities and environment**.

SINCE SOLAR YOUTH'S FOUNDING IN 2000:

- Over **4,200** young people have participated in Solar Youth programs
- Over **250** teenagers have been hired and trained as co-leaders
- Solar Youth “Stewards” (participants in our programs) have completed over **250** youth-led Community Service Action Projects (C-SAPs) and nearly **175** youth-led Public Education Projects (PEPs)
- In 2011, Solar Youth was named **Organization of the Year** by the Connecticut Outdoor & Environmental Education Association.



SOLAR YOUTH PROGRAMS...

- **Incorporate outdoor exploration, leadership development and community service**
- **Target youth with the fewest supports and resources to help them succeed**
- **Are offered year-round for youth of all ages, from 4 to 19**
- **Nurture personal and social competencies within youth**
- **Provide rigorous professional training for teenagers**
- **Help create the next generation of community and environmental stewards**
- **Give youth a boost in science class**
- **Are youth-driven**
- **Are cost effective:** Solar Youth serves 500+ youth annually, all on an annual budget of \$550,000. In the coming year, with support from the State of Connecticut, Solar Youth expects to serve close to 600 youth as we expand our programs to additional low income communities in New Haven with no alternative constructive out-of-school opportunities for youth.

In the long-run, Solar Youth saves Connecticut money:

- According to the recent report, “The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth,” each youth who is neither in school nor employed “imposes – on average and compared to other youth – **an immediate taxpayer burden of \$13,900 per year and an immediate social burden of \$37,450 per year** (2011 dollars). When these “opportunity youth” reach 25, “he or she will subsequently impose **a future lifetime taxpayer burden of \$170,740 and a social burden of \$529,030.**”
- According to the Connecticut After School Network, **“every dollar invested in after school programs will save taxpayers approximately \$3, not including the savings from reduced crime” and “\$1.7 to \$2.3 million is saved by putting one high-risk youth on the right path.”**

Solar Youth's Cycle of Stewardship

PROGRAMS: A young person's journey can start as early as age 4 and continue into adulthood. In the final phase, youth are seasoned leaders, serving as educators for younger children. The circle below shows the Cycle's menu of programs.

PRESENCE: Solar Youth nurtures young people through a consistent presence in their communities and lives. We build safe, consistent, loving relationships with youth throughout their childhood and adolescence.

PARTNERS: Youth have needs beyond our expertise. Through partnerships, Solar Youth provides supports and opportunities that go beyond what we alone can offer. As a result, the system of support is more efficient and effective.

Youth Start Here

Result...



Rakema
Years in Solar Youth: 6



"I learned to be a nice girl and not to fight with other people when they do bad stuff."

89%
of families indicate that Solar Youth helps youth become better friends

Royshon
Years in Solar Youth: 7



"Because of Solar Youth I get respect in my neighborhood."

91%
of interns indicate that Solar Youth helped them develop a more positive sense of self

Tatyana
Years in Solar Youth: 6



"I am a better person to other people and myself, and I believe that I can do anything I put my mind to."

81%
of families indicate that Solar Youth teaches youth to be more sensitive to the feelings of others

Montrell
Years in Solar Youth: 2



"Solar Youth opened my eyes to community, respect, friendship, and leadership."

95%
of interns indicate that Solar Youth prepared them for future employment

Damaris
Years in Solar Youth: 2



"I learned so much about the environment and want to learn MORE!"

92%
of Stewards indicate that Solar Youth helps youth want to do well in school

Solar Youth is a New Haven based youth development organization that empowers youth through environmental exploration, community service and leadership development. Data from fiscal year 2011-2012 feedback.



Testimony from Solar Youth Stewards

Corey Bethea

Hello, my name is Corey and I am here to talk about why Solar Youth is important to me. Well, I was with Solar Youth only two years, but truly it was the best two years of my life. There are games, field trips, and I get to make new friends!

Solar Youth is important to me, because it is like a home away from home. When I come here, it's family. This year in Solar Youth I am a L.I.T. That stands for Leaders In Training. Now I have trainings to become a better leader and I help the Interns with their programs. But really to simplify this, Solar Youth is a part of me and nothing can separate me from this.

Talizha Jones

Hello, my name is Talizha Jones. I've been in Solar Youth for about 10 years, starting when I was about four years old. They have taught me a whole lot about the environment that I did not know about and I am still learning! Everyone has always been kind to me and has taught me right from wrong.

Solar Youth is very important to me and my neighborhood. We have had Solar Youth throughout our whole life offering us new friends, family, learning, and friendship. I have made a whole bunch of friends at Solar Youth. Without Solar Youth we wouldn't have a lot of things to do year round, and without it a lot of people would get in trouble. Solar Youth deserves this opportunity a whole lot because we care so much about them!

Curtisy McGill

Hello, my name is Curtisy McGill and I have been in Solar Youth for 5 years! Solar Youth is important to me because if I wasn't with them I wouldn't get the word out about littering and I would not have fun with all these new people. My favorite activities at Solar Youth are picking up trash for trash competitions, going to the aquarium, and ice-skating! If I wasn't in Solar Youth I would never know who is in the neighborhood. Solar Youth is important to my neighborhood because we help stop people from littering and smoking which is so bad for animals and people.

To the Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Yvette Emery and I have been a resident of Westville Manor for more than 25 years. I am writing this letter to speak on behalf the Solar Youth Program.

I have known Joanne Sciulli for many years now. Her program that she runs in our community is the heart of our kids' very existence. With so much violent crime in the New Haven area, her program is vital in the city. I personally have two generations of children who have attended Solar Youth for many years now: my children and my granddaughter.

I am a single parent who struggles from paycheck to paycheck. I do not have the extra money for my children and granddaughter to attend an after school program. Solar Youth is the best nonprofit organization that I have encountered in a very long time. Solar Youth keeps the children in my community busy, so that they do not have the time to turn to crime or become a city statistic.

I implore you to please continue to fund Joann's organization. The children have benefited tremendously from Solar Youth. My children have learned so much, and they have blossomed into caring, conscientious teenagers.

With my deepest regards,

**Yvette Emery
Westville Resident**