



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 **serving as stewards to their communities and environment**.

SINCE SOLAR YOUTH'S FOUNDING IN 2000:

- Over **4,000** young people have participated in Solar Youth programs
- Over **425** teenagers have been hired and trained as co-leaders
- Solar Youth “Stewards” (participants in our programs) have experienced hundreds of out-of-neighborhood explorations and completed over **334** youth-led Community Service Action Projects (C-SAPs) and nearly **225** youth-led Public Education Projects (PEPs)



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 450+ youth annually, all on an annual budget of \$600,000. 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 in 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.”

Testimony from Solar Youth Stewards

Quintaisja Harrison, Solar Youth Alumnus

Age: 18

Number of seasons with Solar Youth: 8, from 2010 through 2013

Solar Youth has helped me become a more confident and outgoing individual. This organization has helped to shape my community for the better allowing me to interact with others in my neighborhood. Working as an intern for Solar Youth during high school helped me to become a more patient, interactive, and determined young adult. For four years I have worked with incredible individuals that have given me hope for a better future. I opened my mind to new things such as exploration and Community Service Action Projects also known as CSAPS's. I enjoyed working with children around my neighborhood and making a difference in their lives. Every year I look forward to Solar Youth programming so that I can be with others who enjoy explorations and working with young children to give them a shot at an experience that I cherish so much. As of now I am a current freshman at the University of Hartford studying to become a Physical Therapist. Not a day goes by when I don't think back on all of the great opportunities and experiences that solar youth had to offer. This by far is one of the best programs that I have been involved in that reaches across a city and touches so many people forever bonding us and leaving behind a lifetime full of memories and unexpected friendships.

Andy Juarez, Solar Youth Intern

Age: 17

Number of seasons with Solar Youth: 6, from 2006 through 2014

When I was in middle school I participated in a local organization called Solar Youth; a group that reaches out to youth throughout New Haven to teach them about the environment and the importance of conservation. There were various activities that consisted of exploring the community and conducting student-led C-SAP's, Community Service Action Projects. Through Solar Youth, I was introduced to the idea of preserving nature and the environment. The activities and projects I was a part of as a youth sparked my interest. I was so intrigued by the marvels of nature and the mysteries it unravels that once in high school, I became a youth educator with the program.

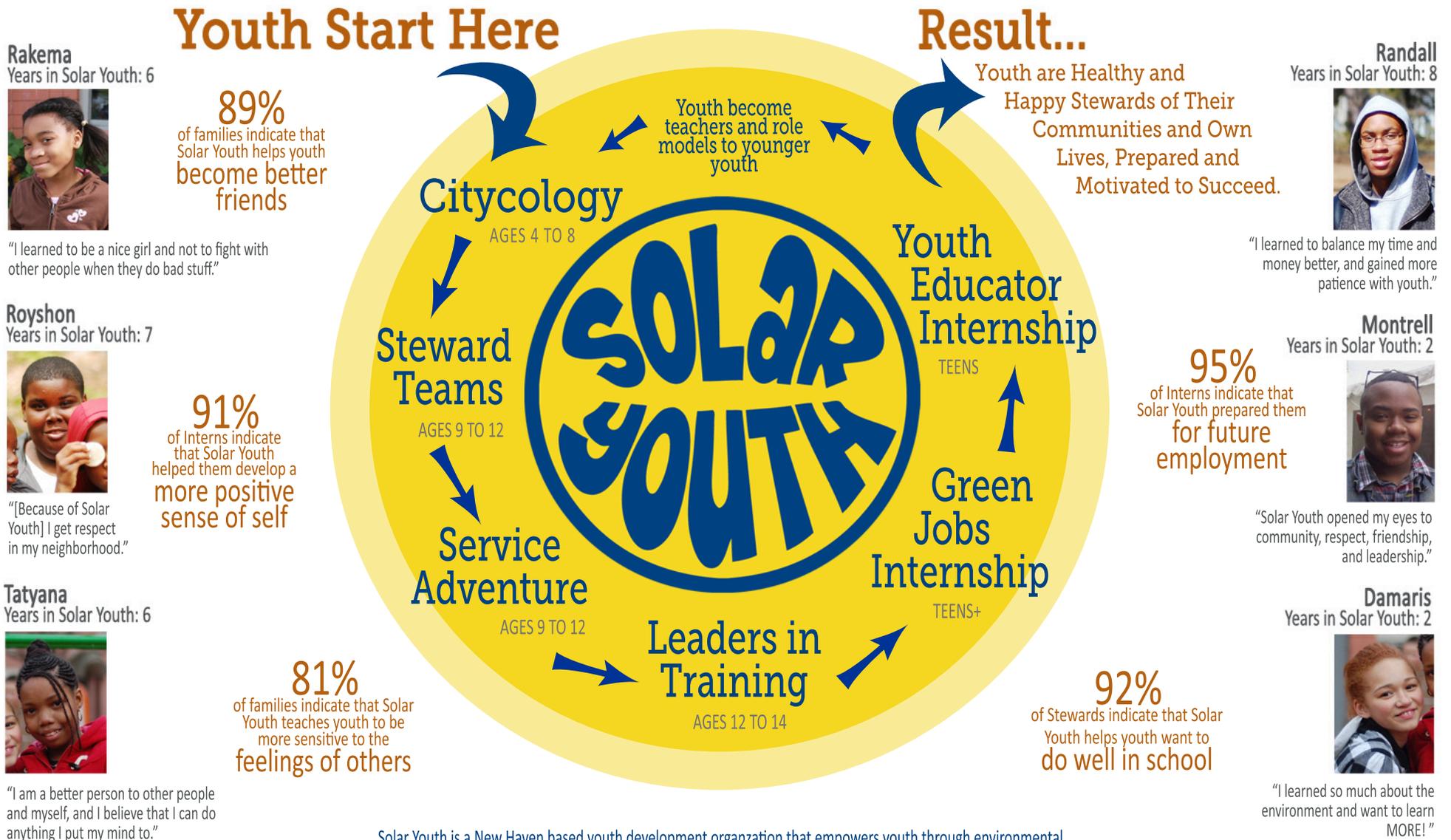
I worked for this organization for 2 years with kids ranging from 5 to 11 years old. Teaching kids the same values I learned, and showing them that they can make a difference in the world, is significant to me. I did not only become a leader in my community, but I made a positive difference in the lives of the youth I worked with and the environment. Often times during program, the students would tell me that they were teaching their friends at school and their families what I was teaching them. One time when a parent picked up their child, they told me that I was doing a great job teaching their child. The parent had observed a change in attitude for the environment in the student. This experience inspired me to continue learning about the environment and pursue an environmental science concentration at the Sound School.

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.



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.