

**MILLION DOLLAR IDEAS:  
THE ENTERPRISING YOUTH PROGRAM,  
INCREASING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH  
FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE**



**Enterprising**  
youth program

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# *Enterprising Youth Program*

## Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative (MYOI)

MYOI serves current and former foster youth ages 14–24 in 64 counties across Michigan. The employment and education programs highlighted serve youth who are enrolled in MYOI

Enterprising Youth  
Program

Business  
Development  
Workshops

Education Success  
Program

Youth Education  
Liaisons

# ***Enterprising Youth Program***

*Encouraging youth to rise to their potential!*

The Enterprising youth program is a partnership between the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency and Fobbs & Walker Consulting.

The purpose of the Enterprising Youth Program (EYP) is to increase economic opportunities for youth with a foster care background through business development, self-employment, job training and social capital. The EYP program serve youth who have been in foster care ages 14-25 from Southeast Michigan (including Wayne, Oakland, Macomb & Washtenaw counties).

## **Grant Partnerships**



THE ANNIE E. CASEY  
FOUNDATION



Fobbs & Walker



*Enterprising*  
youth program

**Social Capital**



**Employment  
&  
Entrepreneurship**



**Education**



**Employability**

# What does Entrepreneurship mean to our youth?

- ▶ “ A person who organizes and manages **ANY** enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative or risk.”  
(Dictionary.com)
- ▶ “Inspired, enlightened social or technological game-changer”  
(Jeseekia, a youth)
- ▶ Research, showed that entrepreneurs in the USA hold a disproportionate amount of wealth. It is reported that the median wealth of households owning a business is three times higher than those not owning a business and 81% of people in the top 1% of the wealth distribution were entrepreneurs. Naudé, Wim (2008:12)

# Framing the issue

“ A long term goal for myself is to own my own home healthcare business. I enjoy working as a personal care worker helping others. It has been a challenge for me to find access to the proper training. I would need to find a job working under someone for awhile to learn the business. I would also need help learning how to fund my own business in the future.” – *Daytwon*



# Who is considered a disconnected youth?

- ▶ According to the Social Science Research Council, a youth between the ages of 16-24 who is not in school or working is considered “Disconnected.”

- ▶ 1 in 7 youth in the U.S. fall into the “Disconnected” category.

Burd-Sharps, Lewis (2014) One in seven: Ranking youth disconnection in the 25 largest metro areas, MEASUREOFAMERICA of the Social Science Research Council., [http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/MOA-One\\_in\\_Seven09-14.pdf](http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/MOA-One_in_Seven09-14.pdf)



# Employment data tells us....

- ▶ The national unemployment rate in June 2014 was 6.1%
- ▶ The Michigan unemployment rate in June 2014 was 7.5%
- ▶ The 2014 unemployment rates in the greater Detroit Metro Area were at 8.0%
- ▶ The 2013 rate of unemployment in Detroit city limits was cited at 17% for adults and 30% for youth.(Burd-Sharps, 2014)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,

<http://www.bls.gov/lau/lacilg10.htm>

Burd-Sharps, Lewis (2014) One in seven: Ranking youth disconnection in the 25 largest metro areas, MEASUREOFAMERICA of the Social Science Research Council,. [http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/MOA-One\\_in\\_Seven09-14.pdf](http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/MOA-One_in_Seven09-14.pdf)





# What does this mean for youth in foster care?

- ▶ For young people in foster care, turning 18 can often mean losing their supports—financial, educational, social, and otherwise.
- ▶ Their peers in the general population often get support from their families throughout emerging adulthood, becoming more independent as their brains develop through age 25.
- ▶ What should be a gradual transition, often becomes an abrupt loss that puts them at risk of negative outcomes.  
(Casey Family Programs 2014)



# Outcomes for youth in foster care

- ▶ More than one in five will become homeless after age 18
- ▶ Only 58 percent will graduate high school by age 19 (compared to 87 percent of all 19 year olds)
- ▶ 71 percent of young women are pregnant by 21, facing higher rates of unemployment, criminal conviction, public assistance, and involvement in the child welfare system
- ▶ At the age of 24, only half are employed
- ▶ Fewer than 3 percent will earn a college degree by age 25 (compared to 28 percent of all 25 year olds)
- ▶ One in four will be involved in the justice system within two years of leaving the foster care system



Courtney, M.E., and Dworsky, A. (2005). Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children

# Three cornerstones of the foundation for youth entrepreneurship

- Education
- Social Capital “Your Network”
- Employability



# Where do solutions begin?

*Youth must be a direct part of the solution*

*Solutions start with structuring partnerships between youth and adults*





# Education Challenges



- ▶ Where do I begin the process of finding and applying for a post-secondary program or business training?
- ▶ How do I pay for my education?
- ▶ Now that I am enrolled, who can I talk to about my struggles?

# The Education Cornerstone

- Trainings – Introduction to the basics of creating and running a business.
- Educational Supports – one-on-one education coach support.
- Micro-Enterprise Business Plan Competition
  - *Training for competition*
  - *Mentor working sessions*



# The Education Cornerstone

- Business Development Workshop
  - Interactive panel of local business professionals.
  - Discussion facilitated by TechTown Detroit centered around business start-up.
  - Small group assistance on developing a business plan.
  - Access to computers to assist in business plan research.
  - Access to college education resources.





# Social Capital Cornerstone

- Business Development Workshop
- Community Partnership Board
- Mentoring



# Social Capital– A network is needed

## Business Development Workshop

**Business Development Workshop Video**

# Social Capital Community Partnership Board

Community Partner Network-  
6-7 youth leaders sit at the table  
with adult community partners in  
Detroit and have ownership over  
the meetings and the focus of the  
meeting topics.



Kaufman, Wendy, A Successful Job Search: It's All About Networking, February 03, 2011 3:43 PM ET NPR ,  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=133474431>



# Employability Cornerstone



# Employability



- Young people who leave high school without a diploma or GED find it hard to obtain employment
- Racial disparities in graduation rates and access to jobs
- In our current economy, employment prospects for youth have decreased within the last ten years
- Lacking soft skills and hard skills



# Employability Challenges

*Preparing youth for work experiences through training and guidance in soft skills.*

While many employers expect their employees to have these abilities coming into a job, many of our youth did not have the skills or experience. There is a need for deeper training in these areas over an extended period of time with young people.

- Communication
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Professionalism
- Teamwork & Collaboration





# Benefits for youth who participate in work

1. Gaining career readiness skills including “soft skills” that employers look for in entry level positions.
2. They will have a better understanding of occupational skills and can make informed career choices.
3. Establish a work history and professional network.

# Entrepreneurs in training

- ▶ One of the youth participants started her own online fashion magazine for young women.

We were able to connect this same youth to a summer job where she tells a story by taking photos and writing about environmental stewardship in Detroit.



*Some programs train youth in technical skills or hard skills needed for specific career pathways, we made sure to include these types of opportunities for our youth featured here.*



# Youth blog about their experiences

●●○○ AT&T 11:18 AM 72%  
workinjourney.tumblr.com



Open in **tumblr.**

Follow

## Jeseekia

Week 1:

A selfie with my new Grand Circus stickers on my laptop. I absolutely love working for a tech startup in my very own City. I am able to experience any area of the business I would like and develop the skills necessary for new age entrepreneurship!!!!



●○○○ AT&T 11:25 AM 66%  
workinjourney.tumblr.com



Open in **tumblr.**

Follow

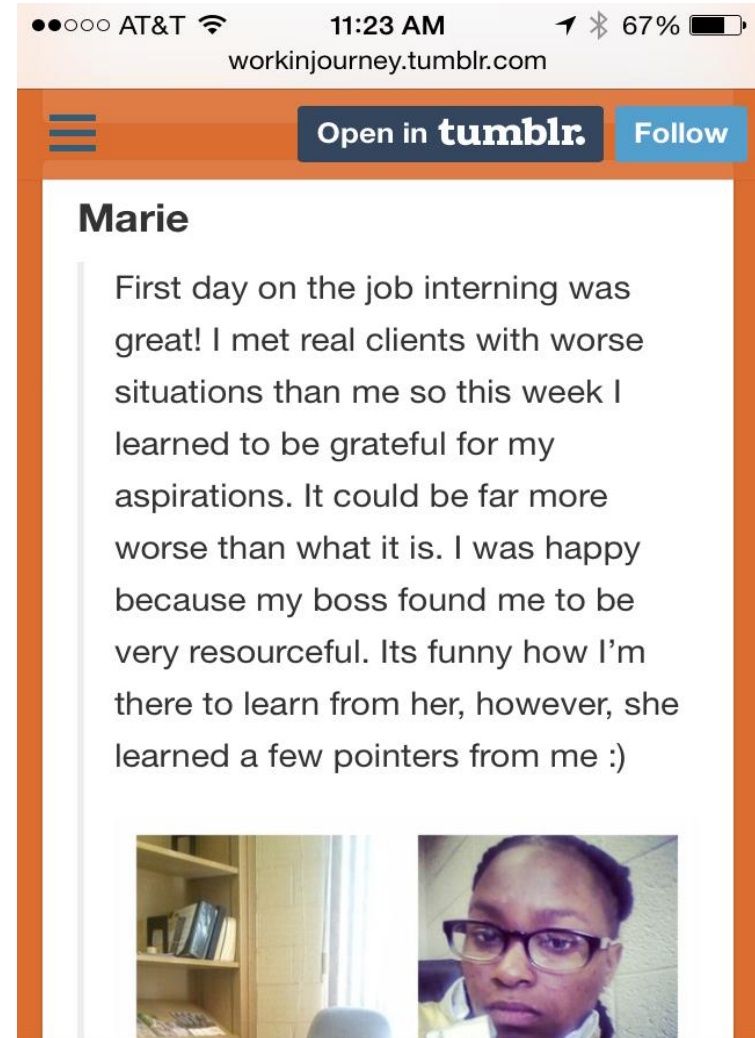
## Darnell

These past 3 weeks I have been working with Mr. Anderson and Experiencia Academy. He has taught me me about computer networking and how to restore data inventory on laptop Chromebooks. I have also learned how to fix broken laptop commuter screens. This week we have been working in the Kindergarten rooms mounting Smartboards. There are more things I have to learn but it's fun and I love it!





# Workinjourney.tumblr.com



# Wrap up

- ▶ We discussed three key cornerstones to engaging youth in laying a strong foundation for employment & entrepreneurship: Education, Social Capital, Employability
- ▶ Buildings require four cornerstones laid for a foundation. It requires authentic youth engagement to discover what each individual's fourth cornerstone needs to be.

*It will look different for each young person based on their life experiences. Through strong youth & adult partnerships we can authentically engage youth in the solutions.*



