



The Yerwood Center

MISSION

The Yerwood Center is focused on providing youth and our diverse community with educational and personal development opportunities that will empower them to reach their full potential and contribute to society.

VISION

Our vision is to be the premier youth center in which every young person, whatever their background, is valued and challenged to become the best they can be.

HISTORY

The Yerwood Center was founded in 1943 as the Stamford Negro Community Center by Dr. Joyce Yerwood, the first African American female Doctor in the State of Connecticut.

In 1950 it became the West Main Street Community Center, and in 1975 the name was changed to the Yerwood Center, in honor of Dr. Joyce Yerwood's many years of unwavering support and dedication to the community. In 2008 the Yerwood Center celebrates 65 years of service to Stamford and the West Side community. The Center continues to focus primarily on the low-income population residing on Stamford's West Side where the ethnic representation is 55% Black, 36% Hispanic, 7% White and 2% other.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Yerwood Center and its children need your help. The following is a sample of the many volunteer opportunities currently available:

- Tutoring • Mentoring • Reading Instruction
- The Arts • Dance Instruction • Music Instruction
- Homework Assistance • Workshop Presentation
- Career Coaches • Language Instructors
- Computer Room Instructors
- Athletic Instructors • Translators

*For more information or to volunteer call:
 Vynette Johnson @ 203-327-2790 ext. 23*

YES Summer Camp

Served up to 209 K-6th grade children, Monday – Friday for 8 weeks. Camp includes academic work, recreation, field trips, community service, arts & crafts, community speakers, and more. In 2007, we added a new ELL component in partnership with the Fairfield Country Community Foundation to help kids continue to use English language skills throughout the summer months.

In 2008, every YES camper participated in 'Broadway Babies,' a full-scale musical where they learned about acting, set design, wardrobe and overcoming stage fright. More than 300 friends and family members attended the evening performance on the second to last day of the camp.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 3 – 5th: Break the Floor for more information, contact Alexander Cobb 203-327-2790 ext. 28

Dec. 12 – Tag Sale/Bazaar – for more info, contact Siobhan Matthew 203-327-2790 ext. 20 for vendors

PROGRAMS

The Yerwood Scholars Extended Day Program

Serves up to 100 K – 5th grade children, Monday – Friday. Students rotate in program blocks through homework help, recreation, community service, computer technology, financial education, and more. Partnering in the Scholars program in 2009-2010 are Stamford Urban League, Girls Scouts, Stamford Achieves, Sound Waters, United Way, Person to Person and the Stamford Sailing Association. Last year, participants in our extended day program averaged 38% increase in grade level skills in math, reading, and writing.

I-XCEL

Serves up to 50 middle school students, Monday – Friday. Students rotate in program blocks through homework help, civic engagement, financial education, community service work, career exploration, computer technology, creative writing, reading, public speaking, and more.

The academic progress of the students is monitored by reviewing their report cards and CMT results. When necessary, the Program Coordinator works with a student's school, parents and the Yerwood Center's Director of Education to create an action plan to address that child's academic deficiencies.

Students are encouraged to participate in career exploration workshops and college tours as they prepare to enter High School. To develop their social skills, students serve as tour guides to guests, showing them the facility and explaining the Center's programs. Recently, they demonstrated their creative talents and produced a 'nutrition rap' which focused on the healthy and unhealthy foods found in fast food restaurants.

Computer Laboratory

Yerwood offers a community computer lab with 20 high speed internet accessible computers and up-to-date software. The lab is open daily with specific time for adults and youth. There is no fee for the use of computer lab or printers.

Yerwood has contracted with an online tutoring program for all youth in our extended day programs. Participants are pre and post tested for grade level skills in math, reading, and writing. Those most in need of skill work participate weekly, customized online tutoring sessions. In the 2008-2009 year, participants showed an average 28% increase in grade level skills.



Become a sponsor!

Growing up, I always looked forward to summer vacation. The summer was always a good time to meet new friends and try new things. I attended a local community center, where my mother, as a single parent raising four children, needed a safe affordable place. The Community Center Summer Program was an alternative to the streets-gang life and negative behavior. Yes, I did have fun, but we also read books, worked on building math, and reading skills. My community center never turned away any child. With strong community support, they were always able to say yes.

The Yerwood Center has been operating a safe and affordable Summer Camp for children living throughout Fairfield County for over 66 years. This year, the Center has created a summer reading camp for youth 5-12 years old. Most of our youths can't afford to take the summer off from the learning experience and need to strengthen their academic skills. Every morning, the children are required to read for at least 30 minutes and some write daily journal entries about the previous days' activities. The well-trained, experienced counselors and staff are hired from within the community. Our field trips, to such places as The Maritime and Garbage Museum, NY Hall Of Science, and the Liberty Science Center are designed to raise self-esteem - all while having fun in a learning environment.

Now as Executive Director of the Yerwood Center, I see over 1,200 community members walk through our door each week for services. I enjoy saying yes to the community when they need meeting space, teen and educational forums, foreclosure workshops, family days, and providing programs that provide safety.

Unfortunately this summer, with community based agencies closing or reducing their programs, I may be forced to say "no this summer". Foundations and corporations are cutting back on donations. In 2009, Yerwood Center served 209 children for our eight-week education, enrichment, and recreational summer program.

The cost for Summer Camp is beyond the reach of many families. Please consider sponsoring at least ONE CHILD this year for Summer Camp. Your sponsorship will enable a child to enjoy the eight-week summer program with friends, recreation, participate in arts and crafts, attend special events, free breakfast and lunch, and more! If you cannot support a full sponsorship, please donate whatever you can.

Make checks and money orders payable to: Yerwood Center and be sure to indicate that your donation is to support the YC Summer Reading Camp. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at ecampbell@yerwoodcenter.org. I thank you, in advance, for your support and generosity toward the Yerwood Center.

Eugene Campbell
Executive Director

For more information about The Yerwood Center, to become a sponsor or to volunteer, call 203-327-2790