



FY12 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

When I think about our work here at CYC, I'm reminded of a past president's plea for community organizations to be "a thousand points of light" doing good throughout our nation. The premise is that even if we can't reach everybody, if we all do our part to help another, many will be helped. In turn, those that have been touched by a light can pay forward by giving that same light to another person in the future.

At CYC, we endeavor to motivate youth – to allow them to shine. We try to instill in them the idea that they are critically important to their families, their communities, and most of all, to themselves. It is vital to encourage positive character that can be called upon to impel them to become successful and caring teachers, business owners, employees, government services workers, volunteers, and other facets of our society.

We strive to teach youths how to interact with other youths by giving them communication, teamwork and conflict resolution paradigms. They learn about their relationships within their families and community. We challenge them to think how their present thoughts and actions impact their future. We help them realize that the problems they face can be solved. We try to teach that solutions usually come through self-discipline, dedication, and plain old hard work. It is deeply meaningful to the CYC youth to know that they are being supported and attaining skills to help conquer personal challenges.

If we all do our part to enable creativity and altruism among the CYC youth, who knows how bright a light these active minds and bodies may become?

This is what we do at CYC. In my world, it's called positive youth development. In the world of the youth we work with, it's called hope. Collectively, we can call it success.

Many thanks to those of you who continue to make the work of CYC successful.

All my best,



Amy Ostrander Croll LMSW, CPS

Executive Director



Our Philosophy and Mission

Community!Youth Concepts started by analyzing data, identifying gaps and partnerships, and addressing needs of today's youth. It was evident very quickly that there were plenty of services to help youth and families respond to crisis situations, but very little in the way of helping the average youth, low income or otherwise, prepare for the world that lies ahead.

According to the Ready by 21 Initiative, only 2 in 10 youth are prepared for the world of work. Employers are commenting that their employees don't have the basic skills necessary for employment, so it's clear our current reactionary strategies aren't effective. Research also tells us when youth are able to set goals, make plans, and reflect on their own work and its impact on others, they are more likely to be successful (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation). Research also documents that when youth are engaged at a young age in volunteer service, they are more likely to be engaged in their community as adults (Corporation for National Service, National Council on Service-Learning) and likely to be more successful in school (Billig, 2004). Daniel Pink, a leading motivation researcher, shows us that for anyone to be intrinsically motivated, they need to have three key components: mastery, autonomy, and a sense of purpose.



Merrill students work on their Dollar Doing Good projects

At CYC, research and best practice guide our work with youth. But, we don't stop at just working with young people. We feel it is our responsibility to challenge the community to look at youth differently. We know that "problem free" youth are not "fully prepared" youth and we know that if we continue being reactionary in our work, we will miss the opportunity to engage a whole range of youth who need support. Only by working together with others in our community will CYC meet its mission to ensure all youth have access to high quality opportunities that prepare them for success in school, work, and life. In the words of Margaret Mead, "It takes a village to raise a child."

Community In Action (CIA)

CIA programming represents opportunities for youth to get engaged in their community, whether that be through the classroom or in out-of-school time. CYC worked with approximately 1200 elementary, middle, and high school youth, getting them involved in their community through short-term projects. Of those students, 26% reports another language besides English being their primary language and 18% of those served have parents who do not speak English. Approximately 25% report having a modification in their school environment.

Projects can be one of three types of service, direct, indirect, or advocacy. The type of service depends on the interests of the students, teachers, and the community. Every student who engages in service through CYC programming is taken through CYC's Integrating Service Model, which



JPEP grads show off their completion certificates.

relies heavily on the IPARD/C model, the model of best practice for service-learning (Corporation for National and Community Service). This model ensures service is youth-driven and connected to community needs. It also guarantees students are intentionally taken through a process of reflection and application, the two pieces that make service-learning different than just volunteering. Finally, students are able to demonstrate and celebrate their success with their peers, families, and the community.

Specifically related to CIA, CYC staffs and manages five out-of-school time groups, occurring at eight locations. "Kids With A Kause" or KWAKers engages approximately fifty youth and their parents in service activities on a bi-weekly basis. The Fabulous. Beautiful. Independent. (FBI) girls group in Saydel, funded by Chrysalis Foundation, meets weekly with approximately 20 middle-school girls to teach leadership skills and connect them to the community.

The Iowa Disabilities Group (IDG) is a group of approximately ten youth, ages 16-22, who care about disabilities and want to impact their community. This group serves as a vehicle for this segment of the population to volunteer and advocate for issues of importance to them. New this year was advocacy work with the Polk County Health Department and a partnership with the Des Moines Police Department to offer the Jr. Police Explorers Program at four area middle schools. Through the work with Polk County Health Department, CYC





Youth in Give 5 summer program maintain the Scavo garden

was able to work with approximately twenty youth to identify their perceptions of health issues and the best way to influence young people to make healthier decisions. Just through the JPEP program, CYC engages approximately 150 youth in service projects over the school year.

Whenever possible, CYC engages the entire family in service opportunities. Research demonstrates that high quality programs engage the family as a unit in the work. Parent and family involvement are key components in our afterschool and community-based programs, where parents volunteer with their child and serve in a variety of support roles and in our school programs when they help students with their research.

CYC has a strong sense that programs should be informed and adjusted based on results and research. With this philosophy in mind, we rely heavily on external and internal evaluation, using standardized tools and ongoing program quality assessment. The external evaluation results of our work through CIA was conducted through Iowa State University as part of the Reach Out Iowa grant from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.

Table 1. Community!Youth Concepts Community In Action results, July 2011-June 2012

<i>Question</i>	<i>Before the Project</i>	<i>After the Project</i>
I know about some of the problems and needs in my community.	66.0% (true)	93.0% (true)
I know about ways to be involved in my community.	75.6% (true)	94.2% (true)
I have the skills to help organize and carry out a community project.	56.5% (true)	86.3% (true)
I take pride in being part of my community.	78.0% (true)	93.7% (true)
I feel valued by adults in my community.	65.3% (true)	85.7% (true)
I can make a difference in my community.	75.7% (true)	94.3% (true)

Mentoring Advantage Program

In 2011, CYC did a community needs scan, identifying that the only middle school and high school-aged youth who have the opportunity to connect with a adult ally in the community are those who have been incarcerated. Yet, in conversations with various school personnel, there are several middle and high school students who would benefit from a positive adult support in their lives. With that in mind, CYC worked with an Advisory Council to develop the Mentoring Advantage Program.

The program, supported in part by the Iowa Department of Public Health, is designed to serve 45 youth. Matches meet for a minimum of four hours per month to discuss career goals, work on school work, provide service, and have fun. Our first milestone with the program was achieved in October 2011 with the designation as a certified mentoring program by the Iowa Mentoring Partnership. This year, most of our work focused on designing and setting up the program, but by the end of the fiscal year, we were able to match twenty-one students. This number is expected to continue to grow as awareness builds about the program.



Even with our first matches being matched for less than four months, we are already starting to see changes in the students. Censeo Solutions, Inc, a local external evaluation firm, assisted with the data collection for the program and those results are reported below in Table 2.

Table 2. Community Youth Concepts MAP Results, December 2011 to June 2012

<i>Academic Outcomes</i>	<i>All Matches</i>	<i>Matched more than six months</i>
Percent of students showing academic improvement	50%, average GPA increase of .35	100%, average GPA increase of .62
Percent of students reducing school absences	40%, average reduction of 9.75 days	67%, average reduction of 17.75 days
Percent of students reducing school suspensions	30%, average reduction of 5.3 days in suspension	N/A
Percent of students reducing office referrals	36%, average reduction of 7 office referrals	N/A

Training and Technical Assistance

CYC staff members and its network of nine consultants are certified trainers in numerous curriculums and processes and are able to offer continuing education units through the Iowa Department of Human Services. CYC staff currently serves as national field consultants for the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and the Forum for Youth Investment, American Camping Association, and the Wyman Center's Teen Outreach Program. Approximately **30 trainings** are offered by CYC annually. Participants can choose from about twenty different trainings that address the creation of safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments for youth participants.

At the heart of CYC's training and technical assistance work is the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool. This tool is the only standardized and rigorous tool currently in large-scale use in Iowa, across program settings, to measure program quality at the point of service for programs that serve youth ages K-12. Most data collected by programs focus solely on inputs and/or outcomes. They look at what they put in to make the program operate, demographic information, and when available, typically academic outcome data reported in the form of grades or behavior referrals. Unfortunately, in the youth-serving arena, outcome data is over-emphasized as many programs don't have the ability to impact the myriad of issues facing youth that contribute to their success, such as hunger, violence in the home, homelessness, etc. Collecting just this data doesn't give programs credit for the great work that they may be doing and it also doesn't help pinpoint areas of improvement. Through the improvement process, staff are empowered to make changes in the environment that they can control to positively impact their program participants. These sometimes easy and radical changes can greatly impact the quality of their services and increases the likelihood that youth will reach important developmental milestones more successfully.

While assessment is at the heart of our work, it is merely a tool to help programs identify staff training and program needs. Of the **39 programs participating** in the Youth Program Quality Improvement process, **78% demonstrated program improvement** as measured by the YPQA within nine months. Thirty-one of the programs assessed were in central Iowa with eight programs occurring in other regions of the state. All participating agencies stated the process helped improve the quality of the programs.

Of the 400+ individuals training in FY12, 205 individuals completed the CYC training evaluation form. Those evaluations show **90.9%** of participants rate the trainer's skills as high and **90% state the workshop quality was high.**

Other Achievements...

Community!Youth Concepts is often asked to assist in other community-wide initiatives that will help engage youth, parents, and other community members for the betterment of all youth. Therefore, all of our staff serve in a leadership capacity on a variety of community and state-wide coalitions.

The 2nd annual Sidewalk Chalk Flood was a success this year! This annual event at the Western Gateway Park engaged close to 400 people, covering the sidewalks with unique sidewalk chalk art. We're gearing up for the 3rd Annual event to occur again in August 2012. It is anticipated this event will continue to grow and inspire the community as a whole.

October 2011 saw the invasion of Kansas University students as CYC hosted five students for their Alternative Spring Break. This partnership paired college students from KU with local middle and high school students to conduct service projects. We hope this relationship will continue to grow in the years to come.

CYC staff and collaborators were very busy in April this year as we launched the first TEDxYouth@Des Moines conference. With the help of Des Moines Public Schools, RandomKid, CultureAll, DMAACC, and the Des Moines Playhouse, CYC was able to help bring the unique and creative stories of ten inspiring youth to the stage. These students, along with their cohorts who performed music, entertained a crowd of 400 youth and adults for a one-of-a-kind experience. It is anticipated this work, now established, will be turned over to its permanent home and combined with the other TEDx events held locally.

On the Horizon...

It is anticipated that FY2013 will be a year of growth through the building of capacity. CYC hopes to start the planning for an AmeriCorps operational grant that will help to infuse over ten full-time AmeriCorps members into the community to expand service-learning opportunities by Fall 2013. This work aligns with the strategic plan and will begin to shift the culture to one of service within our community. We also intend to partner and expand the work related to quality and assessment, with the expectation of assessing and supporting fifty programs in FY2013.

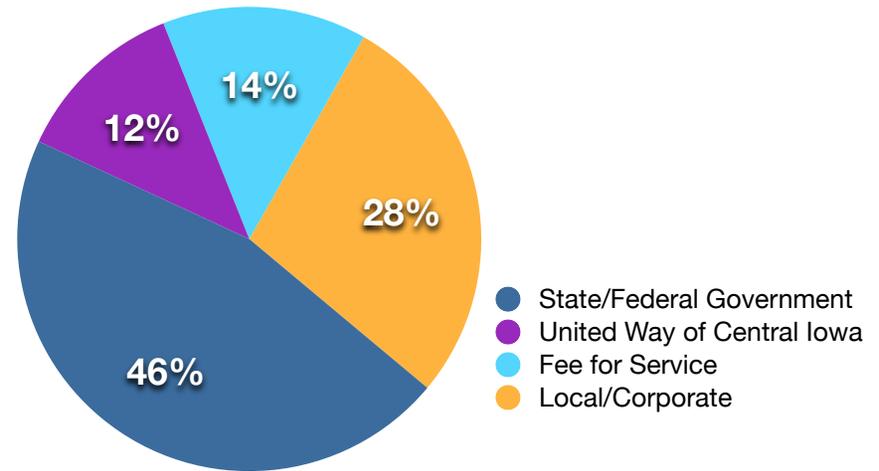


Community!Youth Concepts Financials

Statement of Activities

State and Federal Grants (46%)	\$122,424
United Way of Central Iowa (12%)	\$32,215
Contributions and Public Support (28%)	\$74,415
Training and Consultation Fees (14%)	\$38,071
TOTAL	\$267,075

Source of Revenue: July-June 2012



Program Expenditures

Program	Expenditure
Youth Opportunities (69%)	\$199,180
Adult Opportunities (12%)	\$32,410
Administration (19%)*	\$56,324
*Administration includes strategic planning, new program planning, rent, insurance, financial review, and utilities.	

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FY2012 Staff Members

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Amelia Colwell Reedy, Youth Program Director
Julie Cackler, Youth Development Specialist
Danny Heggen, Youth Program Coordinator
Michelle Raymer, Volunteer Coordinator
Jennie Groves, KWAKer Coordinator*



FY2012 Sponsors

\$20,000 or more	Up to \$999 (Con't)
AmeriCorps Learn and Serve Reach Out Iowa	Richard and Mary Jane Croll
Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council	Mike and Abby Croll
Iowa Department of Public Health	Jennifer Farley
United Way of Central Iowa	Tom Gilsean
\$5,000-\$19,999	Jennie Groves
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Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service	Mark and Mary Whitfield
David and Michelle Cook	Carl and Linda Wong
David and Amy Croll	Jennifer Zwagerman

Many thanks to Short and Company for completing the Community!Youth Concepts FY2012 annual audit. For a copy, please contact Amy Ostrander Croll at amy@cyconcepts.org or 515-243-4292.

To learn how you can get involved in our work, please contact us!