

YOUTH ASSISTING YOUTH YAY

MENTOR • GROW • SUCCEED



EMPOWERING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

2024/2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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2024-2025 was a year of transition and impact for Youth Assisting Youth (YAY)

The 2024–2025 fiscal year underscored the strength of our community and our shared commitment to supporting children and youth across Toronto and York Region. While the broader economic landscape presented challenges, we remained focused on delivering high-quality programming through our established hybrid model, ensuring that families continued to have access to consistent, meaningful support.

The resilience and determination of the young people and families we serve continue to inspire our work. Because of the dedication of our volunteers, staff, donors, and partners, we are entering the coming year with renewed purpose, strengthened collaboration, and a clear focus on sustainability, impact, and opportunity for the communities we serve.

For more than 49 years, YAY has dedicated itself to investing in the leaders of tomorrow, by transforming the lives of youth in at-risk environments today. By giving them guidance and support when they need it most. We do it through the power of mentorship, relationships and connections, and we continue to grow and adapt our programs to meet the increasing complex needs of our clients.

Our evaluation data clearly shows that our programs, services and mentors are having a positive, life-changing impact. We're helping our mentees to build resiliency, form connections, improve their mental health and do better at school. Mentoring and relationships are more important now than ever!

We continue to be inspired by the unwavering support of our volunteers, donors and community. They continue to support YAY's mission of improving the lives of vulnerable youth, and we are so very thankful. We will work even harder in 2024-2025 to provide youth with the relationships, connections and support that they need to succeed in the face of adversity. Mentor. Grow. Succeed.



1,535

Young People
Empowered

We supported a total of 1,535 children and youth in communities across the City of Toronto and York Region, including an estimated 98,380 hours of volunteer service and one-to-one mentoring



Sally Spencer
Chief Executive
Officer, YAY



Dario Kosarac
Chair, YAY Board
of Directors

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Mission Statement:

At Youth Assisting Youth, we create life-changing mentoring experiences that develop the leaders of tomorrow. We are passionate about cultivating supportive, transparent and enriching youth mentoring opportunities.

Guiding Principles:

- Mentoring is an effective tool that allows all individuals involved to develop their full potential
- Youth have the power and potential to make valuable contributions in their communities
- Everyone in the organization is an ambassador who has the ability to seek out and create opportunities that strengthen the organization

Strategic Goals:

- Enrich the Mentor Experience
- Bring the Power and Value of Mentoring to More Youth at-risk
- Grow our Brand and Attract Donors Who Want to Invest in Youth
- Transform our mentoring support, measurement, quality and evaluation

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Who We Are

- Established in 1976
- 49 Years of Youth Mentoring
- Mentees ages 6 to 15
- Mentors ages 16 to 29
- One-to-One Peer Mentoring Program
- Group Mentoring Program
- Youth Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Training
- Youth Mentoring 101 Training
- Girls & Boys Empowerment Programs
- Tutoring Program
- 10,000+ youth matched
- 30,000+ Group Mentoring Participants
- 98% Success Rate of youth graduating high school



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2024-2025 Impact

- 1,535 youth serviced
- 106 kids matched with a mentor
- 605 mentoring relationships supported
- 1,900 group activities (tutoring sessions, girls / boys only workshops and events)
- 521 youth volunteer mentors recruited, screened and trained
- 98,380 hours of mentoring support and volunteer service hours
- 3,460 youth and family support calls
- 166 Active Tutoring Matches
- 73 Group Tutoring Sessions
- 278 Group Tutoring Participants



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Measuring our Impact on Youth

- 96% related well to their mentor
- 97% said their mentor was a positive role model and influence
- 88% reported positive changes
- 92% increased confidence
- 86% improved social skills
- 86% developed stronger relationships
- 82% developed new interests in hobbies and extracurricular activities



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Measuring Strengths & Difficulties in Youth

Research across the globe continues to show the benefits of youth mentoring for both Mentor and Mentee, including increased enrollment in University, increased lifetime income and improved mental health. Mentoring works, and we're proud to contribute our own evidence-based outcomes. Since June of 2016, YAY has been measuring the Strengths & Difficulties of youth mentees, and the data clearly shows that our program is having a positive impact on our youth mentees.

- Pre and Post-test Evaluation
- 1,092 Youth Evaluated since 2016
- Measures: Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Pro-Social, and Hyperactivity
- **What We Want to See:**
 - Increase in Low Difficulty Levels
 - Decrease in Medium Difficulty Levels
 - Decrease in High Difficulty Levels

	Low	Medium	High
Pre-test	64%	15%	22%
	↓ +12%	↓ -7%	↓ -6%
Post-test	76%	8%	16%

“Having a consistent mentor has provided stability during a difficult time for our family. My child feels supported, encouraged, and proud of their progress.” - YAY Parent

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2024/2025 Highlights

- Due to the post-pandemic, the 2024 / 2025 Fiscal Year was another difficult year for our organization and our youth mentors, mentees and their families;
- Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of our clients – anxiety, isolation, depression, psychological distress, violence and much more – continues
- We serviced and supported a total of 1,535 youth last year, including an estimated 98,380 hours of 1:1 mentoring and youth volunteer service hours;
- We created 106 new mentoring relationships and supported 605 total relationships;
- We conducted more than 1,900 Tutoring Sessions, Girls and Boys Empowerment Program workshops and Group events and activities for our youth and families;
- We recruited, screened and trained 521 new volunteer youth mentors;
- Our Social Workers conducted 3,460 support calls to our client and volunteers;
- In partnership with The Orbach Family, we provided 2 outstanding YAY mentors with a 2024 Gil Orbach Joy Scholarship. This was the 6th year of this special program;



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Dean's Story of mentorship



Dean Chen's mentorship journey with Youth Assisting Youth (YAY) has been transformative for both him and his mentee, Ze Qi. Dean, who immigrated to Canada in grade 1, understands the challenges of adapting to a new culture and language. Inspired by the mentors who supported him through significant life transitions, Dean joined YAY to give back and help others.

Matched with Ze Qi in October 2021, Dean faced the challenge of helping Ze Qi find his interests and passions. Under constant pressure to excel academically, Ze Qi had little opportunity to explore new activities. Through their time together, Dean introduced Ze Qi to various sports and activities. They discovered a shared love for volleyball, which led Ze Qi to join a volleyball club and excel in the sport.

Dean's mentorship extended beyond sports, fostering Ze Qi's interest in academics and extracurricular activities. Dean encouraged Ze Qi to join a chess club, helping him develop strategic thinking skills. Over time, Ze Qi's grades and work ethic improved, and he began to think more about his future and goals.

The experience also enriched Dean's perspective. Learning about Ze Qi's family struggles, including dealing with divorced parents and alternating living situations, made Dean more empathetic and less judgmental. This understanding deepened their bond and highlighted the importance of mentorship in navigating life's challenges.

As Dean pursues a double major in neuroscience and cell and molecular biology at the University of Toronto, he remains committed to his goal of attending medical school. His mentorship experience with Ze Qi has reinforced his dedication to making a positive impact on others.

"I knew I was making a positive impact when he started finding his passions and thinking more about his future."

"Mentorship played an important role in my life as it helped me through some of the most important stages of my life."

– Dean, YAY Mentor

