

YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL OF CHICAGO

Annual Report: 2010-11 Academic Year

The 2010-11 academic year was a successful one as the Young Women's Leadership Charter School (YWLCS) community graduated 100% of its Class of 2011, with 90% of those students entering college in the fall of 2011. Class of 2011 Valedictorian, Angelique Boyd, described her experience at YWLCs:

The teachers and staff at Young Women's take the time to make sure that their students are educated, while recognizing that every student is different. I want students who come after me to not lose faith in their ability to succeed if they lack resources or the people around them to really help them grow. I want other students to have the opportunities I have had at Young Women's.

Angelique Boyd, YWLCs Class of 2011

Angelique, who is a Posse Scholar, plans to attend Oberlin College in Fall 2011
Excerpt from speech Angelique gave at YWLCs' Girl Power Luncheon, April 2011.

Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago (YWLCs) inspires urban girls to engage in rigorous college preparatory learning in a small school focused on math, science and technology that nurtures their self-confidence and challenges them to achieve. YWLCs is a small single-sex public school that educates ordinary Chicago public school girls, but achieves extra-ordinary results. In 2010-11, YWLCs was a teaching and learning community consisting of 344 students, 27 teachers and 20 staff members – allowing for a 1:13 faculty/staff to student ratio in our school building.

As a charter school, YWLCs uses a lottery admission system instead of a merit-based admission system. Therefore, our students are representative of students in the Chicago Public School (CPS) system as a whole. Eighty percent of our students are African-American, 11% are Latina, 6% are Caucasian, and 3% are Multi-Racial. YWLCs admits students from across the city and in 2010-11, students came from nearly 30 different Chicago zip codes. Nearly two-thirds of our girls arrive performing at least one grade level behind, while 80% of our students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, indicating that they come from households with a low family income.

There is much to celebrate about this year, our eleventh year as an innovative and effective urban public school. Here are some highlights from the 2010-11 school year:

- We are proud that 100% of our 2011 Senior Class graduated in May and 90% of those have been accepted to attend college! This Fall, our recent graduates will attend colleges and universities such as Smith College, Oberlin College, University of Illinois at Chicago, Hampton University, Northern Illinois University, University of Kentucky, and Clark Atlanta University.
- We are grateful for our generous donors. At our Third Annual Girl Power Benefit Luncheon in April 2011, the school raised \$420,000 and students played a major role during the event. Students introduced our corporate honoree, Jenner & Block's Susan Levy, and keynote speaker Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, gave speeches about their experiences at YWLCs, and showcased some of their school projects to our 800 guests.
- We are thankful to the 250 volunteers who took the time this past year to join our

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students for a half-day or a full day to serve as evaluators and role models. We give a **special thank you to YWLCS alumnae** who showed up to give back to their alma mater, and we greatly appreciate **Chicago Parking Services, Deloitte, Exelon, Goldman Sachs, Harris Bank, Kraft Foods, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Mesirow Financial, and Northern Trust** for sending employees to spend the day as evaluators with our students at different volunteer events throughout the year including the 10th Grade Tea, 11th Grade Mock College Interview Presentations, 10th Grade Career Internship Presentations, and 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Promotion Presentations, Career Fairs, and much more.

PROGRESS ON 2010-11 STRATEGIC GOALS

In order to educate the young women at YWLCS, our community stands on four pillars: (1) academic achievement; (2) career and college preparation; (3) leadership development, and (4) personal and social development. Below is a brief summary of activities in each pillar that took place during the 2010-11 academic school year.

Academic Achievement

Strategic Goal:

Enhance learning environments to foster higher order thinking and to authentically engage students in order to increase their academic growth.

YWLCS and the past four years of my life have created the foundation of who I will be for the rest of my life. The skills I have been taught and developed will stay with me forever and will be applied to everything I do in the future. I am going to Smith College next year and with what I have learned, I feel that I am ready for it and now have the skills that it takes to make it in such a rigorous school. I am ready to take it on.

Gabrielle Morrison, YWLCS Class of 2011

Gabrielle, who was this year's Salutatorian, plans to attend Smith College in Fall 2011.
Excerpt from Senior Reflection

During the 2010-11 school year there were new strategies to provide increased rigor and differentiated instruction in the classrooms and to engage our students in their own learning. This year, we implemented Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA) benchmark testing for our students so that teachers and the administration could track students' growth and could better focus teachers' classroom activities toward areas of students' deficiencies. The testing also helped our students become more comfortable with standardized testing so that they are prepared when taking the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), and the ACT exam. These efforts have paid off tremendously as evidenced by an increase in the 2011 Middle School Academy ISAT scores and a slight increase in our 11th grade students' composite score on the PSAE.

There were also numerous opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning this past year. Below are a few examples of programs and activities that took place to foster higher order thinking and to authentically engage students in order to increase their academic growth.

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Oncofertility Saturday Academy (OSA) - 2010-11 is the fifth year that 32 YWLCS junior and senior students have participated in Northwestern University's Institute for Women's Health Research's (IWHR) Oncofertility Saturday Academy (OSA), an experiential science program at Northwestern University's medical school campus provided exclusively to YWLCS students. One of IWHR's goal is to make sure that women of color are part of the next generation of women leaders in science and medicine. Led by Dr. Teresa Woodruff, the program allows our students to explore the fields of reproductive science and cancer biology, as well as oncofertility, a new field that develops fertility options for those who have been diagnosed with cancer and who must undergo potentially fertility-threatening treatment. The program exposes our young women to the possibilities of pursuing a career in science or medicine. An impressive 80% of those students who have participated in the program since its inception are majoring in a health or science-related field in college.

By the end of the 5-week program, students are empowered to make informed, authoritative decisions about their personal health and have had a chance to explore the variety of college academic programs and career choices in the fields of science and medicine. YWLCS thanks Dr. Woodruff and her team for providing our girls with access to personalized experiences in the medical field and for the opportunity to learn directly from scientists and doctors!

Computer Discovery Camp at the Illinois Institute of Technology – During the summer of 2010, YWLCS students participated in a computer camp for middle school girls at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and engaged in interactive learning activities to stimulate interest in careers in computers and related technology. The IIT camp engaged our students in a variety of discovery activities using Lego Mindstorms and StarLogo TNG. They also used Lego Mindstorms to "build" robots, which helps to strengthen spatial skills. Students also used StarLogo for programming, gaming, modeling and simulation. Furthering our goal of providing YWLCS students with role models of successful women, students had the opportunity to meet and have lunch with IIT undergraduate women in a wide range of academic disciplines at the university.

Pre-College Transportation Engineering Program (PreTRANS) at the Illinois Institute of Technology – YWLCS students had the opportunity to experience and discover architectural and civil engineering through lab experiments and lecture demonstrations by Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) faculty and top engineering students. The week-long program was designed to motivate, encourage and support high-school girls to pursue careers in civil/transportation engineering. Students were able to experience and discover architectural and civil engineering through lab experiments and lecture demonstrations by award winning IIT faculty and top IIT students. Students participated in designing engineering models and attended engineering field trips. The program encouraged the girls to pursue science and engineering careers, and helped develop the girls' communication, creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork skills.

3G Summit: The Future of Girls, Gaming and Gender - Columbia College hosted YWLCS and other high school girls from the Chicagoland area in early August 2010 to meet with leading women game designers and scholars for intensive dialogue, inquiry, game-play, rapid prototyping, and mentorship. Through multi-faceted workshops and a public forum, the 3G Summit confronted gender representation and participation in our society's fastest growing cultural medium.

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University of Chicago Splash Enrichment Workshops – In October 2010, YWLCS students participated in enrichment workshops organized by Splash! Chicago, which is a student organization at the University of Chicago that runs free after-school and weekend programs for high school students. The goal of the program is to introduce students from different walks of life to topics that aren't approached in the traditional classroom— anything from pirate history and culture to tap dancing and religious cults— in a fun, collaborative setting. YWLCS students participated in workshops, such as Flamenco 101, Introduction to Improv, Architecture of the Home, The Elements of Chinese Art, and Breaking Stereotypes Thru Unity of Spoken Word & Social Justice.

Roosevelt University's 2010 Business College Entrepreneurship Academy – Students worked in teams on a fundamental business case to determine the best way for a business to compete, identify capital needs to start a business and devise a plan for managing a business successfully.

Career and College Preparation

Strategic Goal:

Maintain school-wide infusion of programming from grades 7-12 and develop a coherent programming sequence to introduce the young women to a range of college and post-secondary options and opportunities.

Growing up, I never wanted to go to college. I thought I was going to somehow die before I got to college, and I thought college was an evil way to keep young people miserable in school. That changed in 11th grade. My biology teacher told me about a science camp that was going on at Northern Illinois University (NIU). I found myself very excited by it—more excited than I'd been about anything at that point. I tried very hard to gather the application materials by the deadline. I was pessimistic, but I did get into the program. It was a residential camp in DeKalb, and I almost chickened out at last minute. I had never been away from home before, and I was scared. But I went, I had a great time, and I opened my mind to college. I decided that if I did go to college, it would have to be to NIU.

Kali Stephens, YWLCS Class of 2011
Kali plans to attend Northern Illinois University (NIU) in Fall 2011.
Excerpt from Senior Reflection

The Young Women's Leadership Charter School (YWLCS) continues to fulfill its mission of preparing young women for college and assuring their subsequent academic success. We currently have students at Smith College, Spelman College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Hampton University, Northern Illinois University, University of Kentucky, Clark Atlanta University, and Michigan State University, as well as college graduates who are in graduate school and who work as professionals in Illinois.

As soon as students arrive at YWLCS in 7th grade, our teachers waste no time in introducing career and college possibilities to them. Many incoming students have little, if any, exposure to, knowledge of, and connections with college-educated career women. Many of our students will be the first in

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their families to go to college. Given the realities about many of our students and their lives, YWLCS promotes a culture in which all girls are encouraged to open themselves up to many different career possibilities, as well as the idea that they can go to college and succeed.

Recent qualitative research has shown the importance of our college prep program in assuring college success. Our graduates have cited the encouragement they received at YWLCS; many have told us that they had "not thought of college" or had "not believed it was possible" until they learned otherwise at our school. Close relationships with faculty and an emphasis on leadership have resulted in the cultivation of young women who are able to "self advocate." Faced with obstacles, our students form relationships with faculty, ask for help (and receive it) and avail themselves of remedial programs when necessary. Many of our alumnae attributed these abilities to the YWLCS culture.

Below are some of the activities that took place this past year in order to get our youngest and oldest students thinking about different career choices and where they are going to college.

Wednesday University Days - The YWLCS administration instituted a new initiative in 2010-11 where all students, faculty and staff members were asked to dress in college/university attire every Wednesday. This initiative generated a lot of dialogue between faculty/staff and students. Students often asked questions about schools represented on staff members' attire, which helped further expose our students to different colleges and universities that they may consider attending.

College Visits for our 11th and 12th Grade Students - During the 2010-11 school year, YWLCS' 11th and 12th grade students visited Northwestern University, DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Knox College, and North Central College. The visits allowed our students to learn about a variety of schools and to experience what it is like to be on a college campus.

Internships for all 10th grade students - During the 2010-11 school year, YWLCS had 27 partner organizations that allowed nearly 50 10th grade students to intern at their offices, including Environmental Design International, Ross Barney Architects, McCormick Place/Navy Pier, Exelon, Chicago Children's Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, and many more!

Students STEP-UP at Smith College - In July 2010, YWLCS' middle school students participated in Smith College's STEP-UP program (Summer Talent Exploration Program- Unleashing Potential). This weeklong program on Smith's campus allows our middle school students to explore their talents while learning about college. The students participated in workshops, exploratory activities, public speaking, the arts, and health/wellness activities.

Career Day for all YWLCS students - Throughout the 2010-11 school year, YWLCS hosted Career Fairs for our Middle School Academy (7th-8th grades), Junior Academy (9th-10th grades), and Senior Academy (11th and 12th grades). Students rotated among different rooms that featured upwards of 40 professionals representing different fields, arts & communications, social services, medicine, finance, business, architecture, engineering and technology. Students enjoyed the personal stories and advice that the professionals shared and were able to ask questions about what education is needed in order to succeed in certain careers.

Class of 2011 Gets a Target Send-off to College - YWLCS' 2011 graduates received a warm send-off to college by YWLCS Board member Liz Kramer Lefkofsky and her husband Eric Lefkofsky in July 2011 at Target! For the 4th year in a row, the Lefkofskys treated YWLCS graduates who are planning to attend a 2 or 4-year college to a Target shopping trip to buy necessary supplies for

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college. Those 30 students who are attending a 4-year college were allotted an allowance of \$300 to use to buy school supplies and dorm room furnishings for their first year in college. Those 7 students who are attending a 2-year college received \$100 each for the shopping spree. YWLCS sends a huge thank you to Liz and Eric for continuing to help our graduates get ready for their first year in college!

Leadership Development

Strategic Goal:

Increase leadership opportunities for all students in classrooms, school wide and in the community through coaching and mentoring to empower students to achieve a model of ethical and collaborative leadership.

To me leadership is following my path in life and helping others find their path. I hope to be able to help others in my life, as well as find myself and true happiness. Young Women's has prepared me for my life outside of high school. I am ready.

*- Jazmin Gonzalez, YWLCS Class of 2011
Jazmin will attend Malcolm X College in fall 2011
Excerpt from Senior Reflection*

As evident in the name of our school, the Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago places high emphasis on the development of leaders. Our young women from grades 7-12 are expected to graduate from YWLCS with a clear understanding of what it means to be a leader and with the tools necessary to act as moral, ethical leaders in their post-secondary educational and professional experiences.

YWLCS creates an environment for the girls in which they continually see what leadership looks, sounds and feels like. During these critical years when adolescent girls are finding their voice, YWLCS teachers and staff serve as daily role models of competent, articulate, compassionate adults. At major transition periods in the girls' path through high school (moving up from 8th to 9th grade, from 10th to 11th and at the end of senior year) they make presentations in order to develop increasingly sophisticated public communication skills. The presentations are critiqued by volunteer women professionals who give real world feedback, and act as role models for the girls. Each year, approximately 250 individual women professionals volunteer for the presentations. During the school year, the girls can assume various leadership roles by participating in student government and clubs or acting as tour guides for school visitors. Additionally, through our board and professional women volunteers, we offer the girls many exposure opportunities outside school. Every year, a group of 10 students attends Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky's Power Lunch and the Chicago Foundation for Women Lunch. Additionally, our students represent the school at other YWLCS meet-and-greets and at our Girl Power Luncheon.

To complement our in-school infusion of leadership opportunities for our students, YWLCS was pleased to partner with the Civic Leadership Foundation (CLF) during the 2010-11 school year to implement an in-school civic leadership education (CLE) program for 7th and 9th grade students and a leadership elective for 11th and 12th grade students. The CLE program has provided a structured opportunity for YWLCS students to reflect on themselves and their abilities to be a leader. A structured leadership program has been needed at YWLCS for a long time and CLF has allowed us to provide a curricular opportunity to explore leadership in an innovative way. We thank the Civic Leadership Foundation for underwriting the civic leadership education program at YWLCS.

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Below are a few highlights of how our students' attitudes and perceptions toward leadership have changed because of the CLE program:

- As a result of the leadership course, students came to view leadership more personally and engaged in leadership activities within the YWLCS community. For example, 9th graders formed a "turn around team" to help their underperforming classmates increase their grades. The 9th grade team used practices of exemplary leadership as taught in CLE which include: 1) model the way; 2) inspire a shared vision; 3) encourage the heart; 4) enable others to act; and 5) challenge the process.
- Ninth grade students participated in a Leadership Symposium at the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora centered around leadership development and social entrepreneurship as espoused by CLE. The symposium was an opportunity for cross-communication of best practices and social activism through presentations and round-table discussion with other students. The Symposium opened up YWLCS' students eyes to the possibilities of how students can be social entrepreneurs in their own community in furtherance of CLE principles.
- The 7th grade students practiced the principles of leadership and began to develop model projects to improve their communities, such as providing fitness/nutrition for peers, helping stray animals find homes, and working with the elderly who don't have family members to visit them.

The CLE program also included a Speaker Forum where women professionals were invited to share their nuggets of wisdom and success with our students. We hosted professionals from McDonald's, Northern Trust, and U.S. Bank. The Forum was an excellent opportunity for YWLCS students to interact with and learn from successful women leaders and it allowed students to make connections between their leadership class and real-world experience from successful women.

YWLCS looks forward to continuing to partner with the Civic Leadership Partnership in 2011-12 as we expand the program to include more grade levels, and an increase in how often students will take a leadership class per week.

Personal and Social Development

Strategic Goal:

Provide systems and models for the desired behaviors of the Community Contract, the YWLCS 5 qualities (respectful, responsible, scholarly, creative, hard-working) and the foundation for living healthy and fit lives.

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This school has helped me grow mentally and emotionally. They YWLCS teachers and staff have taught me that I need to always stay focused and concentrate on school because no one is going to stay on me about my work when I get to college. One life lesson that I have learned this year is that "the pain of discipline is far worse than the pain of regret." After this year I can honestly say that I have changed as a person and a learner as well. I was once a choice maker, but now I am a decision maker.

Jahna Hunter, YWLCS Class of 2011

Jahna plans to attend Western Illinois University in fall 2011

Excerpt from Senior Reflection

YWLCS recognizes that unless a girl is well-supported by an extended community and resources, she often falters on her path to a productive and fulfilling future. Learning in a safe, productive and positive community and creating and sustaining it is everyone's responsibility. All girls are assigned to an advisory group in which they receive individualized attention and guidance from a teacher. Approximately 43% of our students participate in after-school programs provided by one of our community partners, Chicago Youth Center, and all girls are encouraged to participate in other extracurricular programs provided by additional program partners such as Northwestern University, Project Exploration, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Steppenwolf Theatre.

Finally, the small school structure at YWLCS allows for relationship-driven education, which transforms the trajectory of students' lives. Within the school community, every student is known by name and knows that she has allies and support for her success at YWLCS. Recognizing that many of our students may confront not only the typical challenges of maturation from adolescence to young adulthood, but also additional barriers arising from community poverty, YWLCS provides additional social services and programs, coordinated by our student support team, which includes two full-time social workers. YWLCS also has a school-based health clinic in partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Neighborhoods Initiative Division of Community Health. Clinic services at YWLCS are available for our students, their families, and the Bronzeville community, including the elementary school next door. Services that students can receive from a nurse practitioner at the clinic include physicals, eyecare, sexual health, nutrition education, and mental health. The clinic also employs a part-time social worker, who coordinates student cases with the school's two full-time social workers. A physician from UIC oversees the program.

During the 2010-11 school year, YWLCS continued its partnership with Chicago Youth Centers (CYC) to provide a robust after-school program. The programs are led by CYC staff, and offered at YWLCS for YWLCS students. CYC is a Bridgeport organization that invests in youth in underserved Chicago neighborhoods to help them discover and realize their full potential. Because of funding received by CYC to help run the program at YWLCS, there was no cost for students to participate in the programming. More than 150 YWLCS students participated in the programming this past year, which included the following clubs:

- ACT Prep Club
- Pom-Pom Club
- Community Service Club
- Student Government
- Cosmetology Club
- Healthy Me

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- Dance Club
- Newspaper and Yearbook
- Understanding the Fantastic
- Fashion Design Club
- Indoor Tennis Club
- Students Advising Us (Youth Program Advisory Board)
- Teen Summit
- Global Girls

Measures of Our Success

While many of the girls who enter YWLCS are under-prepared and from low-income homes, which are often barriers to success for many Chicago Public School students, at YWLCS they graduate from high school, go on to college, and are well-prepared to become productive and contributing members of our community.

Promotion, and High School Graduation Rates

- At the end of the 2010-11 academic year, the promotion rate at YWLCS across all grades was 88%.
- 100% of the class of 2011 graduated. On average over the last 6 years, 95% of YWLCS seniors have graduated from high school.

Application, Enrollment and Graduation in Post-Secondary Education

- This year, 90% of the graduating class plans to enter college in the fall. On average, 85% of YWLCS graduates start college or other post-secondary education in the fall following graduation.
- The majority of YWLCS students who entered college in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 are continuing in school and expect a degree within the next year. By stark contrast, the most recent research indicates that only 8% of Chicago public school graduates will obtain a college degree by the age of 25.

YWLCS and Our Vision for the Future

The Young Women's Leadership Charter School (YWLCS) has demonstrated that one small school dedicated to the success of young women can indeed empower young women to believe that they can and will go to college and become successful contributors to their community and the world. YWLCS will continue to move forward with a renewed passion and tenacity to fulfill our vision that "All young women will have the skills, tools and opportunities to develop as ethical leaders shaping their lives and the world."

Financial Reporting

YWLCS closed its books for the 2010-11 year on June 30, 2011. The annual audit will begin in August 2011 and a final audit report will be delivered to YWLCS in November 2011. Enclosed is a list of 2010-11 donors.