



Newsletter

June 2018

Dear Friends,

Wow - what a spring! With the school year coming to a close, I'm excited to share some highlights and announce an important new project that will affect YPIE's work for years to come.

In this edition of the *Slice of YPIE*, I invite you to read about the new **YPIE College Zone** currently under construction, the recent success of the **YPIE/Regeneron STEM Scholars**, outstanding college admissions news, including **Lina Montes** and **Osama Elgabori's** inspiring personal stories, and the **College Admissions Convening** that has catapulted YPIE into the national conversation about college persistence. I also want to share our excitement at being recognized this month by the Yonkers Council of PTA/PTSA Board with the New York State PTA Community Service Award acknowledging an organization's dedication to the children and youth of New York.

Many thanks for your continued interest in our work and support to make all of this possible for students. And please Save the Date for **YPIE's 11th Annual Fundraising Gala** on Thursday, October 11. More to come!!

Thank you!

Wendy Nadel  
Executive Director

# Breaking Ground on a New YPIE College Zone



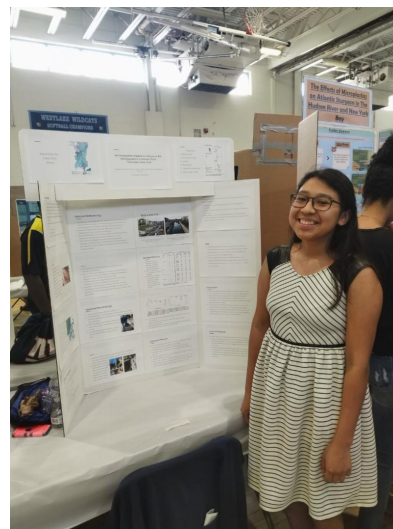
Thanks to an initial grant last year from Impact100 Westchester, YPIE is building a 5,200 square foot, state-of-the-art learning space at 92 Main Street in downtown Yonkers to inspire our next generation of students. A general assembly hall,

classrooms, meeting rooms and a kitchen will accommodate the 500 students who participate each year in YPIE programs afterschool and during the summer. Construction is currently underway and scheduled to be complete in the Fall of 2018. [Learn more about the new College Zone and how you can support this exciting new effort.](#)

## YPIE Regeneron STEM Scholars Win!

On Saturday, June 3, for the first time ever, fourteen YPIE Regeneron STEM Scholars competed at the 7th Annual Science Fair at Westlake High School, a competitive event for Westchester County high schools. And out of nearly 400 participants, two YPIE STEM Scholars won awards! When the announcer at the award ceremony read our students' names, he paused to announce that, "This is the first year Yonkers has been at the fair, and I'd like us all to give a round of applause for what they've accomplished."

Citlalli Rojas, right, a Yonkers High School Junior, won 3rd place in her category of Environmental Science for her project on *The Human Factors Affecting American Eel Migration* in the recently day-lighted Saw Mill River, which runs right through the heart of Yonkers. This summer she will continue to collect data on eels and perform water quality assessments at various points along the Hudson River to compare levels of pollutants to this year's eel migration numbers.



Aishe Samadder, left, a Sophomore at Yonkers High School, won 3rd place in her category of Medicine and Health for her project on *Spinal Cord Regeneration in Zebra Fish*. There were about 80 participants in this extremely competitive category. This year, Aishe hopes to work in a laboratory environment, in order to get hands-on experience doing the kind of research she has been reading and learning about all year.

YPIE's Chief Program Officer, Sam Wallis commented, "Throughout the event I couldn't help but think that our students will arrive at college on their first day and will see some of the same kids they competed against this weekend and they will know that they belong, despite coming from such a different background."

The Science Fair took place just days after the **Inaugural YPIE Regeneron STEM Symposium** held at the YPIE College Zone on May 29 showcasing science research

projects from the first class of 14 YPIE Regeneron STEM Scholars. An inspiring presentation from Regeneron Senior Scientist, Richard Torres was followed by students sharing poster presentations of their research topics and proposed methodologies. Working alongside mentors from STEM fields in labs throughout Westchester County, YPIE's STEM Scholars will continue to conduct and publish research on a topic of their choosing and participate in regional and national science competitions like the one at Westlake High School. [Read more.](#)

## Approaching the Finish Line...College Success

In our continued commitment to match YPIE students with a diversity of colleges, this year's college destinations are noteworthy, including: Albany, Bard, Barnard, Baruch, Binghamton, SUNY Buffalo, City College, Cornell, Dartmouth, Drexel, Fordham, Harvard, Hunter, Lehigh, Lehman, Manhattan, Maritime, Middlebury, New Paltz, NYU, Oswego, Pratt, Spellman, Stony Brook, Sophie Davis, Rochester Polytechnical Institute, University of Pennsylvania, Vassar, Wesleyan and Yale.

Meet two YPIE first generation students heading off to college next fall.

### Lina Montes



Each year more YPIE students are applying to more selective colleges and programs. Contributing to the increase is the thoughtful counseling provided by YPIE's college advisors and a relatively new opportunity: the fly-in weekend.

Lina Montes will attend Yale University next September. She attended six fly-in weekends before applying to 19 colleges. Designed to expose academically ambitious students, who may not have the means, a chance to experience campus life, elite colleges are providing expense free weekends to students they deem serious candidates for the school. Fly-in applications are rigorous and competitive, but participation significantly increases a student's chance of acceptance into the college's freshman class.

So it wasn't surprising when Lina received acceptances from Colorado College, Johns Hopkins, Wash U, Hamilton and Williams. But that was just the beginning. Nearly ten more colleges accepted Lina into their freshman class, including Brown, Northwestern and Yale.

The daughter of Colombian immigrants, Lina will be a first generation college student. Her younger brother is in awe of the work she's put into the college process. But it didn't start senior year. In fifth grade, Lina set a goal to make Principal's List and she's done so every semester since. She juggled her full IB course load with her leadership role on a competitive club soccer team in Mamaroneck.

Lina's advice to rising seniors is twofold: seek help and stay organized. Lina leaned heavily on YPIE's resources, including volunteer College Coach Art Pearlman. And she credits her color coded spreadsheet for getting her through fly-in applications, college essays, supplements and scholarship applications. She admits that at times - especially when her family relies on her to do the shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundry - she



wanted to give up. But she is determined, embodying the qualities of Yale's "Bull Dog" mascot. You've got this, Lina. Yale is lucky to have you!

## Osama Elgabori



As we finish chatting about Osama's hard work and inspiring path to Wesleyan University, his Algebra II/Trig teacher who overheard us adds: "What Osama won't tell you is that his most admirable quality is his humility."

Soft spoken and unassuming, Osama is the oldest of five children whose parents, as a young couple, came to the US from Sudan, Africa so the family they planned would have better educational and economic opportunities. Although on a college campus for the first time only a year ago, his parents' dream was that Osama attend an Ivy League school.

Seeing his dad leave for work every morning at 3 am motivates Osama to keep going when the pressure of his full IB course load gets to be too much. He admits that he's worked hard to keep his

grades solid and was disappointed when babysitting and other family obligations prevented him from pursuing extracurricular activities that might have made him an even more competitive candidate at some lies. But he says this with no resentment and explains that his parents assured him that no matter where he was accepted at college, they would be proud of his hard work.

Osama saw Wesleyan for the first time last summer during a YPIE bus trip and was captivated by the campus' beauty and the feeling he got from the students. He was surprised, but delighted to learn that they had a way for him to study both engineering and liberal arts.

"Visit college campuses," Osama advises students. "The best way to get a feel for a college is to go on a campus tour or even stay over." Since receiving his Wesleyan acceptance, visiting campus again as an accepted student and seeing all the clubs and activities he can now take advantage of, Osama is more convinced than ever that Wesleyan is a great fit. He's too humble to say, but Wesleyan is fortunate to have Osama in their Class of 2022. We wish him great success.

## YPIE Joins the National College Conversation

Admitting high achieving students from low income communities to elite colleges is a trend receiving national attention. On April 25, a few days before a "60 Minutes" report on the topic, YPIE convened a panel of more than 15 college admissions representatives from selective colleges as diverse as Barnard, Haverford, Union, Franklin & Marshall, Georgetown and the University of Pennsylvania.

Facilitated by college admissions expert, Jacques Steinberg, the author of "The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College," a New York Times-best seller, and a former New York Times higher education journalist, the panel shared best practices for recruiting and supporting students who have the dual



challenge of attending an under-resourced high school and growing up in a family unfamiliar with the U.S. higher education system.

This is where YPIE fits in. For almost 11 years, we have been preparing students beginning in ninth grade for the academic rigors of college and the life skills required to navigate the challenges that inevitably arise. We've learned the secret to successful college enrollment and

completion comes down to three key factors: preparing students with a comprehensive continuum of academic instruction beginning in 9th grade so they're ready to compete; knowing students and their families intimately so we can connect students to colleges where they'll thrive academically and socially; and supporting students through the transition to college and during the first two years when confidence typically falters. [Read more](#)

## Announcements

### SAVE THE DATE YPIE Annual Fundraising Gala October 11, 2018



X20 Xaviars on the Hudson



### Program Calendar

Check out our [Program Calendar](#) to stay up to date on all of YPIE's upcoming programs and events.

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