

2024

Annual Report
Impacting Greater Kansas City
Youth Since 2010



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About Our Organization

Our Mission

Youth Ambassadors is an educational employment program designed to empower underserved teenage youth with important life skills, soft job skills, creative expression, and adult mentors, helping them become future community leaders willing and able to work for positive change.

Our Vision

Youth Ambassadors' vision is to help youth reach their fullest potential through creative and innovative programming.

Our History

Youth Ambassadors was founded in 2010 by Tiffany Poor Lynch and Paige O'Connor, two concerned citizens who saw a need to serve and support vulnerable youth. The initial cohort of youth served were 20 teens from the Argentine community in Kansas City, KS. Since that time, our organization has served more than 4,000 Greater Kansas City youth. We provide essential life & job skills training and vital mental health support for young people on the pathway to a successful adulthood.

From the Executive Director

2024 was an incredible year of growth and impact for Youth Ambassadors! We celebrated a highlight moment for our organization at the Grand Opening of our new permanent headquarters at 3130 Troost with our youth leading the way.

We are proud to contribute to the revitalization efforts taking place in Kansas City's urban core. Our sincerest hope is that our new headquarters will serve as a powerful symbol of resilience, potential, and hope for our youth as future leaders of Greater Kansas city.

Many thanks to our program partners and community stakeholders, who join us in this work of empowering young people. We will continue our efforts to tirelessly invest in youth through mentorship, training, resources, and support, as we guide them towards success after high school graduation.

On behalf of our incredible Ambassadors, our Board of Directors, and our dedicated staff—thank you for your continued support of our mission to empower youth to become future community leaders, willing and able to work for positive change.

Dr. Monique Johnston
Executive Director
Youth Ambassadors, Inc.



2024 Board of Directors



Peter Long
MCH Strategic Data, Inc., CEO
Youth Ambassadors, Board President



Monique Johnston, Ph.D.
Youth Ambassadors, Executive Director



Tiffany Poor Lynch
Youth Ambassadors, Co-Founder



Margie Clenn
Moneta Group, Family CFO, CPA
Youth Ambassadors, Treasurer



Alicia Douglas
Rockhurst University, Director of
Community Relations & Outreach



Brandon Haverty
ReCor Properties, Principal



Brett Cooper
Black Rhino Transport, LLC, Principal



Nikki Hutson
Dentons Law Firm, Partner—
Employment & Labor



DePrice Taylor
KC Current, Executive Director

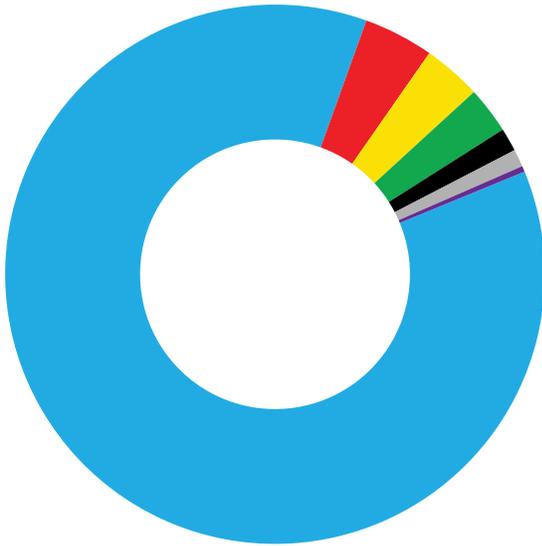
2024 Leadership Team

- Monique Johnston, Ph.D. – Executive Director
- Deanna Snider – Youth Program Director
- Elizabeth Fernandez – Community Projects Manager
- Lara Salgado – Marketing & Communications Manager
- Andrew Smitka – Director of Development

Youth Demographics

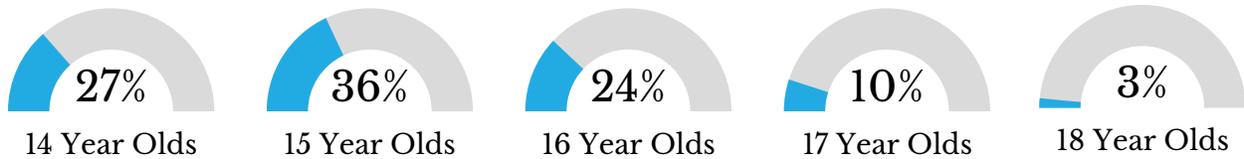
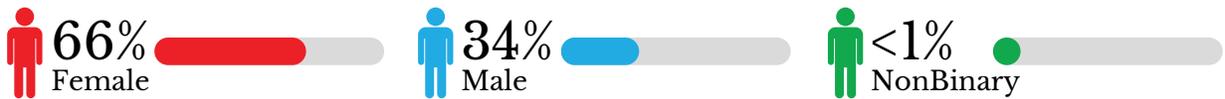


Race Demographics



- 87% - African American
- 4% - Hispanic
- 4% - Mixed Race / Other
- 3% - Caucasian
- 1% - Middle Eastern / North African
- 1% - Asian
- <1% - Native American

Gender & Age Demographics



Youth Applicants

428 teens served

555 applicants



Youth Impact Stories

“Being a Youth Ambassador means a lot to me, considering that I’ve been part of the program since we were meeting in Hogan’s basement. I love being able to help my community. YA has changed me in so many ways—it’s improved my public speaking and my ability to communicate with others without feeling awkward. YA has also helped me build confidence and gain more control over myself by giving me the opportunity to develop coping mechanisms for when I’m not feeling my best.

I would describe YA as helpful because of all the community projects they do, welcoming because they provide a support system that feels like home,

and lively because of the creative opportunities they offer us. It’s helped me connect with so many people—I used to keep to myself, but I realized there are other teens just like me who want the same thing: to change the community.

To the supporters, thank you for everything you’ve done for us. Your support really goes a long way, helping us grow into better people and making our community stronger for the future.”

**–Jamon
McCullough II,**
Youth Ambassador, 17 years old



Youth Impact Stories

“Me personally, I think Youth Ambassadors helped me improve my communication skills with people and also be more open about my opinions. I just feel more confident talking to people and also stating my opinion. Whether it’s negative or positive, I always feel like it’s good to state your opinion, especially when it comes to how you want to change your community, especially as a young Black youth.

To me, being a Youth Ambassador means standing up for what I want in my community or setting an example for other youth.

Something I’ll take with me from YA is that I need to be more mindful of what other people are going through, regardless of how they look or how they seem to come off.”

–**Alanah White**,
Youth Ambassador, 18 years old



Youth Impact Stories

“Being a Youth Ambassador means taking on new challenges—you get to take opportunities, try to learn new things, and try to excel in things that you already know. A skill I will take with me in the future is that it’s important to communicate with others and not try to make everything according to what you want, but to make sure it’s something that everyone can agree with. They helped me step out of my comfort zone. To those who support YA, I would thank them for giving me the opportunity to do this because it’s quite fun here.”

—**Araya Boykin**,
Youth Ambassador, 17 years old

Our Impact

Life & Job Skills

Life & Job Skills provides comprehensive training in essential life and career-building competencies. Sessions include financial literacy, goal setting, and identifying career strengths, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.

Health & Wellness

Youth gain essential coping mechanisms, while learning self-regulation, constructive conflict resolution and stress management, equipping youth with practical techniques to navigate life's challenges with resilience.

Creative Writing

Youth engage in collaborative projects such as short stories, poetry, spoken word, and podcasting. Through this journey of self-expression, participants discover how to use the power of storytelling to shape their identities and amplify their voices.

Art Expression

Youth hone their skills in self-portrait painting, perspective art drawing, still life depiction, and abstract expressionism. The program provides a nurturing space for experimentation and growth, allowing participants to release their imaginations and cultivate a deeper understanding of art and themselves.

“Youth Ambassadors is a great place to [...] learn more about the community and to learn things that are important for the future. It’s a fun place to be to get more involved in your community.”

–Solange Esther Uwizeye



“I’ve genuinely enjoyed my time at Youth Ambassadors. It’s provided me with more opportunities for going to college, and has allowed me to not only learn, but to have fun while learning.”

–Araya Boykin

Group Chat Therapy

Group Chat is a youth group therapy program where Ambassadors connect with one another and a licensed therapist. Our teens learn coping mechanisms, self-regulation, and other tools to reduce symptoms of anxiety & depression.

In 2024, the Group Chat Therapy Program served

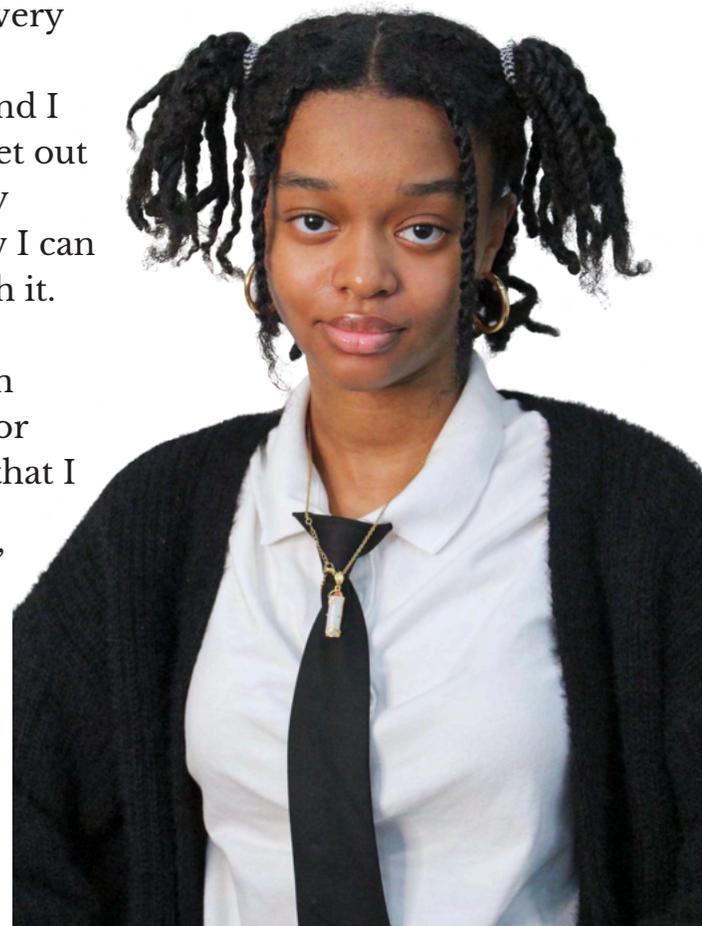
92 Youth

“I think it's important for teens to learn and talk about mental health because they can learn how to control their emotions better. It's important to know that you have somebody and you have someone to talk to about your mental health, and it's okay to feel those emotions.

I wanted to be in Group Chat when I heard about its mental health benefits towards teens, I feel like it was very beneficial with me. I wasn't very open with communicating my feelings to other people, and I feel like group chat has definitely helped me get out of my shell more. I learned how to regulate my emotions, learned the causes of stress, and how I can move along with those feelings and get through it.

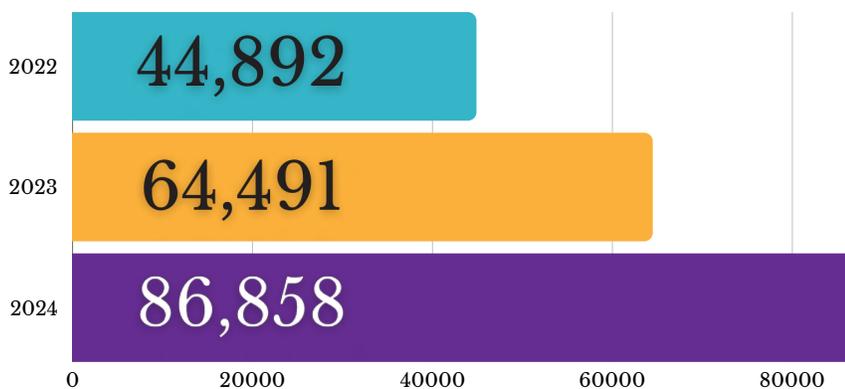
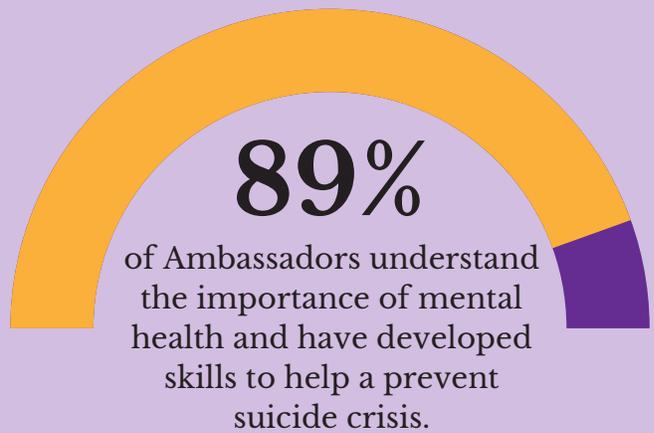
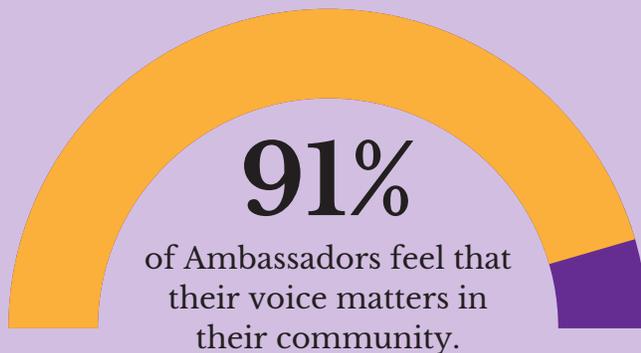
Group Chat helps me grow as a person, and I'm not stuck in the same spot that I was last week or when I was feeling sad or angry. Just knowing that I can push through this and get past these hard times just really helps me flourish as a person.”

–TraShell Meridy,
Youth Ambassador, 17 years old



S.A.V.E. Program

This year, Youth Ambassadors' Suicide Awareness & Anti-Violence Education (S.A.V.E.) program engaged teens in meaningful discussions and advocacy efforts on a range of important topics, including mental health, building community, eating disorders, building confidence, and drug awareness. Through education and open conversations, participants worked to raise awareness, prevent violence, and empower their peers with knowledge and resources. We are excited to continue expanding and strengthening our S.A.V.E. program in the future.



In 2024 the S.A.V.E. Program impacted a total of **86,858** individuals on social media.

Mock Interview Day

Mock Interview Day is a hands-on experience designed to prepare teens for their future careers by equipping them with essential interviewing skills and professional confidence. Youth participate in one-on-one mock interviews with real employers and community leaders, receiving feedback on their resumes, communication skills, and overall presentation. This experience helps teens build confidence, refine their responses, and gain insight into workplace expectations.



93%

of Ambassadors were able to determine their strengths and weaknesses during their mock interview.

94%

of Ambassadors feel better prepared for future job interviews.

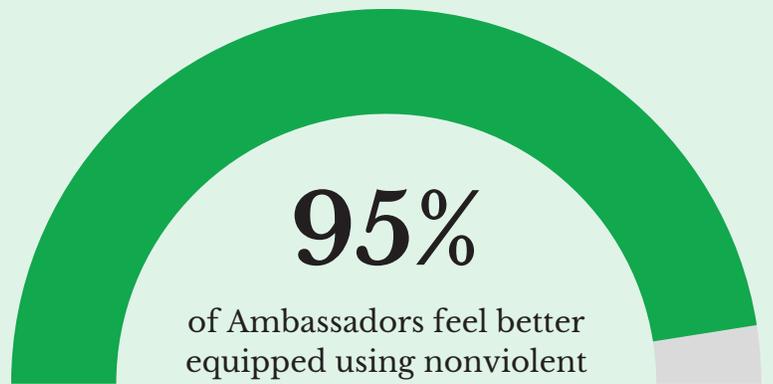
Thank you to our incredible volunteers for making Mock Interview Day such a meaningful experience! Your time, feedback, and encouragement helped equip our youth with essential career skills and the confidence to step into their futures. We truly appreciate your support in empowering the next generation of leaders!





Teen Peace Summit

Our 4th Annual Teen Peace Summit was the first time the event was open to all KC youth. Through a peace walk, meaningful discussions on violence prevention, and collaborative activities, teens explored ways to create safer communities and drive positive change. This summit provided a platform for youth voices to be heard and fostered unity, empowerment, and a shared commitment to peace.



of Ambassadors feel better equipped using nonviolent methods for conflict.



of Ambassadors understand the importance of being a mentor for their generation and the next.



College & Career Day

Our College & Career Day gave teens the opportunity to explore their future paths through hands-on experiences, expert advice, and real-world connections. From engaging with college representatives to networking with professionals across various industries, youth gained valuable insights into higher education and career opportunities. This event empowered them with the knowledge and confidence to take their next steps toward success!



89%

of Ambassadors gained awareness on what type of career and educational options they can pursue after high school graduation.

97%

of Ambassadors feel better prepared for future educational or employment opportunities.

Colleges & Organizations

- University of Kansas Medical Center
- University of Missouri Kansas City
- U.S. Air Force
- Kansas State University
- Kansas City Police Department
- Kansas City Kansas Community College
- Great Jobs KC
- Concorde Career College
- Rockhurst University
- KCK Fire Department
- UMKC Dental School

Community Ambassador Projects

Connecting teens with meaningful community work and local organizations remains at the heart of our mission. In 2024, we continued to provide opportunities for young people to develop essential life skills, cultivate civic responsibility, and build empathy. By engaging with Kansas City's resources and leaders, they explored career pathways, expanded their professional networks, and deepened their connection to the community. This involvement not only empowered them to take an active role in shaping their future, but also reinforced the importance of local achievements and collective impact in building a stronger Kansas City.



1,801 hours
of youth community
engagement work.



Grand Opening YOUTH AMBASSADORS BLUE JEAN Bash 2024 EMPOWER



Grand Opening

Our Grand Opening and Blue Jean Bash was a powerful celebration of community, empowerment, and the bright future ahead for Kansas City's youth. On a beautiful fall day, more than 120 supporters gathered to mark this milestone, touring our new Teen Empowerment Center and Youth Ambassadors headquarters—a space designed to be a safe, inspiring home for our teens. The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce joined us for the ribbon cutting, and special guests, including Executive Director Dr. Monique Johnston, Board President Peter Long, Jackson County Legislator Manny Abarca, Dr. Marvia Jones, Director of the KCMO Health Department, and Brandon Krekel, Member Engagement Manager of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce shared words of encouragement and vision.

Thank you to everyone who showed up, contributed, and believed in this mission—this is just the beginning!



Event Highlights:

- \$51,290 raised to support Greater Kansas City youth
- Over 120 supporters in attendance
- 2024 Paige O'Connor Hope, Heart, and Healing Award presented to Ambassador TraShell Meridy
- 2024 Tiffany Poor Lynch Founder's Scholarship Award presented to Ambassador Aniyah Rowe

2024 Operational Financials

■ Program Expenses – 60%

- Youth Instructors
- Ambassador Pay
- Program Supplies
- Mental Health Contractors
- Other Program Expenses

■ Management Expenses – 37%

- Administration
- Travel & Meetings
- Professional Services

■ Fundraising – 3%



**These figures depict cash withdrawals.*

Since its founding in 2010, Youth Ambassadors has provided more than \$1,000,000 in direct support & pay to youth in the community.



- Foundation / Grants – 53%
- Government Support – 39%
- Contributions – 8%

**These figures depict cash deposits.*

Stakeholders, Donors, & Friends

\$10,000+

- Alma and Phil Morelock Fund
- Children’s Services Fund of Jackson County
- Curry Family Foundation
- Francis Family Foundation
- Hall Family Foundation
- Health Forward Foundation of GKC
- Herb & Bonnie Buchbinder
- Hunt Family Foundation
- Ira K Witschner Charitable Trust
- Jackson County COMBAT
- Jackson County Mental Health Fund
- KC Common Good
- KC People's Fund
- Kauffman Foundation
- KCMO Health Department
- MCH Strategic Data
- Missouri After School Network
- Our Healthy Jackson County
- ReBuild KC
- Roger A. and Corinne R. Durkee Fund
- Sherman Family Foundation
- Shirley & Barnett Helzberg Jr.
- Sunderland Foundation
- United Way of Greater Kansas City

\$5,000–\$9,999

- Arts KC
- BlueScope Foundation
- Brandon Haverty
- Community Capital Fund
- Forest Family Foundation
- Hallmark Cards, Inc
- Henry E. Wurst Family Foundation
- Tiffany and Gregory Lynch

\$4,999 & Below

- Angela Edwards
- Angelica Nelson
- Anne Hickok
- Anne Zeitelhack
- Anthony Olson
- Anthony Stpeter
- Ashley Wenzel
- Bank of Prairie Village
- Bellow Marketing
- Bill & Natalie Busch
- Bill and Maureen Berkley
- Brandon & Jess Loop
- Brett Cooper
- Brian Mesmer
- Casey & Randy Brock
- Christine Kemper
- Christopher Grimsley
- David Chinnery
- David de la Fuente
- David Von Drehle
- Dentons US LLP
- Derik Hampton
- Diana Radzevich
- Donna Bushur
- Empower Retirement
- Ericka Davis
- Fisher Watson
- Graham Ryan
- Great Southern Bank
- Hamilton Saxion
- Hannah Beairsto
- Hayden Kennison
- Jillian Letrinko
- Joe Pindell
- Kansas City Chiefs
- Karen & Joe Kupersmith
- KC Current
- KC Junior Board
- Kevin & Gaye O'Neill
- Kevin Shinnors
- Krishna Lee
- Laura Long-Aractingi
- Leigh Reynolds
- Linda Peterson
- Mallory Gobet
- Mark O’Connell
- Moneta Charitable Foundation
- Nathan Willett
- Nicholas Paradise
- Nikki Hutson
- Paula Neth
- Robert Schissler
- Ronald & Melissa Langstaff
- Short Family Foundation
- Steve O'Neill
- Stolzer Family Foundation
- Susanne Mitko
- Temple Made Fitness
- Terry Smitka
- UMB
- Wyatt Iseman

Our Partners





Youth Ambassadors

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