

Welcome to Our July Newsletter!




Speak Into The Light Newsletter – July/August Edition

Don't Be Rude Summer Recap

This summer, we proudly hosted our **Don't Be Rude Program** in partnership with **Fairhill Partners**, with generous sponsorship from **Neighborhood Connections**. The program created a powerful space for connection, growth, and positive behavior modeling across generations.


 We welcomed **20 children, 11 parents, 16 grandparents, and 9 young adults** through our partnership with **Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.)**.

Over several sessions, participants engaged in:

-  **Manners-Based Games** that focused on gratitude, respect, and self-awareness. These interactive games allowed children and adults to reflect on how their words and actions affect those around them.
-  **A Formal Etiquette Dinner** where children practiced everything they learned—from how to properly set a table to confidently introducing themselves and showing appreciation to their hosts. The evening was elegant, uplifting, and a clear reflection of their hard work.
-  **Event Setup and Breakdown Training**, giving youth and young adults the opportunity to lead and take responsibility for organizing a professional event. From arranging tables to thanking guests, they learned hospitality from the inside out.

 (Space for photo collage: children setting tables, formal dinner service, group activity shots)

This summer, we witnessed young people grow in confidence, kindness, and communication. Parents and grandparents told us they noticed positive changes at home—children showing more patience, initiating greetings, and helping with chores.

 **Testimonial Highlight:** *"I've never seen my grandson hold a door for someone without being asked—now he does it all the time!" – Program Grandparent*

The **Don't Be Rude** program shows that when we teach manners with love, we build futures rooted in respect.

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Thank you for continuing to support Speak Into The Light. Together, we're growing minds, building futures, and strengthening communities!

YASS Program Update: Building Pathways & Planting Purpose

This summer, the **YASS (Young Adult Supplemental Skills)** program strengthened its impact through dynamic partnerships and new hands-on opportunities. We collaborated with **Towards Employment** and **MAGNET**, Cleveland's premier manufacturing training hub, to provide access to high-demand career pathways.

🔧 We supported **11 young adults** in applying to MAGNET's workforce program, connecting them to training in technical fields like CNC machining and robotics, and preparing them for long-term, high-wage careers in Northeast Ohio's advanced manufacturing sector.

With **Towards Employment**, participants also received career coaching, resume assistance, interview prep, and transportation and job readiness support—building real pathways to professional success.

NEW PROGRAM ALERT: Thrive from the Ground Up

🌱 We're excited to announce that **Thrive from the Ground Up** has officially launched as an **extension of the YASS Program**, combining workforce development with sustainability and urban agriculture. Rooted in the heart of Cleveland's neighborhoods, this community homesteading initiative teaches families and youth how to grow their own food, reduce reliance on external systems, and build resilient futures through hands-on, small-space agriculture.

🌻 Whether you live in an apartment, backyard, or shared garden space, Thrive from the Ground Up empowers you to:

- 🌱 Build and maintain raised-bed gardens, hydroponic towers, and grow walls
- 🐝 Learn beekeeping, chicken care, composting, and rainwater harvesting
- 🍲 Practice homestead cooking, food preservation, and seed saving

🍎 A core component of the program is our **youth-led 4-H Club**, serving ages 5–19. Youth develop agricultural and financial literacy, leadership, and responsibility—all while growing food and creating small-scale business opportunities through a **Grow & Barter Exchange** model.

💼 From soil to sales, participants learn how to turn their skills into sustainable income and invest back into their communities.

💡 *We believe when families grow their own food and learn to sustain themselves, they gain power, pride, and purpose.*

🔗 Learn more or get involved at <https://speakintothelight.org>