

# A NEW ERA of YOUTH SERVICE in AMERICA

BEGINS JULY 4, 2026

**Pennsylvania Statewide Partner Forum**  
January 19, 2026 | 1:00-3:00PM

Hosted by  in partnership with   
at the Pocono Cinema & Cultural Center



**“Our lives begin to end the day we become  
silent about things that matter”**

# MLK Day: A New Era of Youth Service in America

## Why We Are Here

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is more than a day of remembrance. It is a call to action. Dr. King believed deeply in the power of service, justice, and collective responsibility. He challenged us not only to dream of a better world, but to actively build it through courage, compassion, and community engagement.

Today, we gather at a pivotal moment. Across our communities, young people are experiencing disconnection, uncertainty, and barriers to meaningful civic participation. Yet, they also bring powerful ideas, lived experiences, creativity, and an undeniable desire to make a difference. The question before us is not whether young people care, but whether our systems, institutions, and adults are creating the space, trust, and pathways for them to lead.

MLK Day: A New Era of Youth Service in America was created to listen, reflect, and reimagine what service and civic engagement can look like in this generation. This convening centers youth voice, elevates lived experience, and brings together young people, educators, community leaders, families, and organizations to explore how we can remove barriers and build stronger connections between youth and their communities.

This event is part of a broader statewide and national conversation about the future of service as we approach America's Semiquincentennial in 2026. As we honor Dr. King's legacy, we are reminded that progress requires participation—and that democracy is strongest when every voice is heard, valued, and empowered.

Today is about listening.  
Today is about learning.  
Today is about action.

We invite you to engage fully, reflect deeply, and join us in shaping a new era of youth service—one rooted in trust, equity, purpose, and possibility.



# Our Team



## Moderator

Gena Campbell  
Youth Infusion  
Girls Infused Program Director  
Trauma Coach

## Adult Panel Facilitator

Shayna Carty  
Community Agency  
Commissioner  
PennSERVE

## Youth Panel Facilitator

Arielle Biggs  
PA Youth Commissioner  
YLAB Student Ambassador  
East Stroudsburg North  
High School



**Cheryl Adams**  
Youth Infusion  
Director of Programs  
YLAB Lead Task Force Mentor

**Linette Medina**  
Youth Infusion  
YLAB Task Force Mentor

**Roma Bajaj Kohli**  
Youth Infusion  
YLAB Task Force Mentor  
Life Coach



# Youth Panelists

Students from our Youth Leadership Advisory Board (YLAB) Program.



**Kendall Medina**

YLAB Student Ambassador  
Executive Education Academy  
Charter School

**Aaliyah Allen**

YLAB Student Ambassador  
East Stroudsburg South  
Senior High School

**Noelia Barbosa**

YLAB Student Ambassador  
East Stroudsburg South  
Senior High School



**Jaritza Caytiro**  
YLAB Student Ambassador  
Liberty High School



**Arsh Kohli**  
YLAB Student  
Livingston High School

# Adult Panelists



**David Heayn-Menendez**  
Children First  
Senior Advisor for Communications  
Lewisburg Borough Council President

**Dr. Damary Bonilla-Rodriguez**  
Author, Governor's Advisory  
Commission on Latino Affairs (GACLA)  
Commissioner

**Daniel C. Bosket**  
Community Action  
Development Allentown  
Director



**Neyda Biggs**  
Youth Infusion  
YLAB Task Force Mentor

**Jose Medina**  
Executive Education Academy  
Charter School  
Head Girls Basketball Coach

**Maggie Hartmann**  
Community Advocate and Organizer

# YOUTH PROGRESS

## WELCOME

1:00PM – 1:05PM

Moderator: Gena Campbell

## OPENING REFLECTION & PRAYER

1:05PM – 1:10PM

Linette Medina,  
Youth Infusion Task Force Mentor

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

1:10PM – 1:15PM

Performer: Kendall Medina,  
YLAB Student Ambassador

## OPENING REMARKS

1:15PM – 1:20PM

Elika Almeida, Co-Founder & Executive Director,  
Youth Infusion

## YOUTH PANEL: LIVED EXPERIENCE, BARRIERS & VISION

1:20PM – 1:45PM

Youth Panel Facilitator: Arielle Biggs  
Youth Leadership Advisory Board Student  
Ambassador & Pennsylvania Youth  
Commissioner

## ADULT PANEL: SYSTEM, EQUITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1:45PM – 2:15PM

Adult Panel Facilitator: Shayna Canty  
Community Agency Commissioner, PennSERVE

## INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE & AUDIENCE Q&A

2:15PM – 2:40PM

Moderator: Gena Campbell

Virtual Q&A: Caitlin Myers & Scott Ganske (YSA)

In-Person Q&A: Cheryl Adams & Linette Medina

## REFLECTION & CALL TO ACTION

2:40PM – 2:55PM

Shayna Canty

## CLOSING & NEXT STEPS

2:55PM – 3:00PM

Moderator: Gena Campbell



Congratulations to Arielle Biggs and Shayna Canty on their newly appointed leadership roles, officially sworn in on Saturday, January 10, 2026, by Judge Jamie Levy. Arielle's appointment as a Pennsylvania Youth Commissioner and Shayna's appointment as a Community Agency Commissioner with PennSERVE reflect the power of youth voice, civic engagement, and service in action. Their journeys embody Dr. King's call to lead with purpose, courage, and a deep commitment to justice, and we are incredibly proud of the meaningful change they are creating for young people and communities across Pennsylvania.



## A New Era of Youth Service in America

Begins on July 4, 2026

### A New Era of Youth Service Starts Now

As we approach America's 250th birthday in 2026, youth voice, service, and civic engagement matter more than ever.

Help shape a national strategy that ensures every young person has the opportunity to lead, serve, and make change.

**Scan the QR code to take  
the Community Partner Survey**



**A NEW ERA of  
YOUTH SERVICE in  
AMERICA**





Powered by Youth Infusion and Hosted by the Youth Leadership Advisory Board (YLAB) Student Ambassadors

## Rooted in Youth Podcast - @RootedinYouthPodcast

Rooted in Youth is more than a podcast, it's a movement led by young people themselves. Powered by Youth Infusion and hosted by our incredible YLAB Student Ambassadors, this podcast amplifies youth voices, breaks down barriers, and explores real solutions to help the next generation thrive.

Today's teens are facing unprecedented challenges: mental health struggles, motivation gaps, digital overwhelm, and a growing sense of disconnection from their communities. But what happens when we hand them the mic? When we give young people the chance to speak openly, be understood, and lead the conversation?

Through real, honest, youth-driven dialogue, Rooted in Youth Podcast dives deep into what young people truly need: connection, support, purpose, and opportunities to rise. Each episode explores the intersections of mental health, leadership, identity, motivation, mentorship, digital wellbeing, and community engagement through the eyes of the youth experiencing it.

**Hosted by the YLAB Student Ambassadors, this podcast:**

- Elevates authentic youth perspectives that are often overlooked
- Highlights youth-led initiatives and leadership in action
- Features conversations with teens, educators, mental health experts, and community changemakers
- Offers actionable insights for families, schools, and communities
- Bridges the generational divide and builds stronger pathways for youth success

Rooted in Youth Podcast is where young minds are heard, valued, and supported and where the community listens, learns, and joins them in creating real change. Whether you're a parent, educator, youth advocate, mentor, or young person yourself, this podcast gives you a window into the realities and brilliance of today's youth. Join us as we uncover stories of courage, leadership, innovation, and hope.

Because when we invest in youth, we invest in the world they will lead.

**Sponsored By:**



PROJECT **AWARE**



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP ADVISORY BOARD (YLAB) PROGRAM™

## EMPOWERING YOUTH TO LEAD WITH PURPOSE FOR YOUTH AGES 15-18 YEARS OLD

Youth Infusion's Youth Leadership Advisory Board (YLAB) Program is a youth-led initiative designed to empower young people with purpose, leadership skills, and meaningful connections to their communities. We believe that young people thrive when they have a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and opportunities to make a real impact.

Education should be student-centered, authentic, and engaging, promoting self-esteem, motivation, and the development of real-world skills. Unfortunately, traditional education systems often limit this kind of learning. YLAB bridges that gap by connecting students, teachers, business leaders, parents, and community mentors to foster learning that is experiential, inclusive, and transformative.

Through YLAB, young people are encouraged to identify and define issues, share their perspectives, and design service-learning projects that create positive change in their schools and communities. They develop leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills while promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and cross-cultural understanding.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

YLAB students participate in a year-long leadership experience that blends service learning, mentorship, mental health awareness, and civic engagement. The program is guided by the F.A.C.E.S. Curriculum – Focused Action and Change through Education and Service, which emphasizes self-discovery, community connection, and global awareness.

#### Key Features Include:

- **Youth-Led, Mentor-Supported:** Students are guided by vetted community Task Force Mentors who complete a Code of Ethics, Mentorship Training, and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) certification.
- **Peer-to-Peer Connection:** Students build networks of support through collaboration with other youth leaders across the region.
- **Service-Learning Projects:** Using the five stages of service learning—Investigation, Preparation, Planning, Reflection, and Celebration—students design and implement projects that address real community needs.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** Every participant completes teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training to help themselves and peers who may be struggling.
- **Global Citizenship:** Students learn about the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda, exploring how local action connects to global impact.
- **Civic Engagement & Advocacy:** Students participate in community events, leadership workshops, and may have opportunities to visit the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations in New York City.
- **Leadership Development:** Training in communication, financial literacy, digital literacy, and career readiness prepares students for future success.





# YOUTH LEADERSHIP ADVISORY BOARD (YLAB) PROGRAM



## Program Highlights

- Open to all high school students ages 15–18 – no GPA requirement
- Youth present service-learning projects in their communities and schools as part of Global Youth Service Month in April in partnership with Youth Service America
- Attend a 2-day NEPA Youth-Led Leadership Conference in April
- Receive letters of recognition, performance awards, and certificates of achievement
- Qualify for scholarships and honorariums
- Collaborate and network with students from other schools and across the world
- Receive teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) Training (Evidence-based training Program through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing)
- Participate in National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) End the Silence Presentation

Through YLAB, young people gain the confidence to lead, the compassion to serve, and the courage to speak up for what matters. Together, we are building a generation of changemakers who are not only shaping their own futures but transforming their communities.

**YSM**  
Youth Service Month

**GYSD**  
Global Youth Service Day

**YSA**  
Youth Service America



# Youth Infusion's Co-founder & Executive Director



*"I believe in the power of youth voice and the positive impact our youth can have in their communities, in their own lives and in the lives of others. When young people feel empowered, feel heard and have purpose, they become leaders and drive positive change throughout the world."*



**Elika Maria Almeida**

Director@youthinfusioninc.com

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