THIS IS HOW YEP EMPOWERS YOUTH IN LOUISIANA
How the Youth Empowerment Project Positively Impacts At-Risk Youth in Louisiana

While many organizations make it their mission to empower the youth, this organization particularly focuses on helping underserved youth in Louisiana by providing opportunities for both soft- and hard-skill development.

What is YEP?
New Orleans-based Youth Empowerment Project helps young people through community-based education, mentoring, and employment readiness programs. Most notably, the organization empowers youth by assisting them in developing hard and soft skills, which include trades, interview tactics and interpersonal relationship management. YEP commits itself to developing respect, accountability, integrity, progress, and kindness.

Started in 2004, YEP assists the State of Louisiana by providing entry programs for at-risk youth. The organization utilizes community-based reintegration, mentoring, prevention and intervention, and a team of YEP youth advocates.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Youth Empowerment Project serves as an organization dedicated to developing soft and hard skills for at-risk youth. Photo courtesy of the Youth Empowerment Project.

Eric M. Craig
Editor

While many organizations make it their mission to empower the youth, this organization particularly focuses on helping underserved youth in Louisiana by providing opportunities for both soft- and hard-skill development.
Gerald’s Story

Primary Program: Community-Based Mentoring
Secondary Programs: Trafigura Work and Learn Center’s Creative Digital Media Program
Age: 16 Teen SET Program, Afterschool Program

When you find a place that makes you feel at home and part of a supportive family, you stick around. Eight years ago, Gerald came to YEP as a middle school student and now he is a high school senior.

Gerald says he found out about YEP from a brochure during a time when he was struggling with managing his anger. Fast forward to today and the 16-year-old says his life has changed for the better. Gerald acknowledges he has made major milestones and he credits YEP. "Now I’m calm and collected. YEP hooked me up with a job, everything is going so well. YEP has had a pretty positive impact on my life,” said Gerald. Gerald was first introduced to YEP as a child and took advantage of YEP’s Community-Based Mentoring Program. He then got involved in our Teen Summer Employment Training (SET) Program, Afterschool Program and most recently he graduated from our Trafigura Work and Learn Center’s Creative Digital Media Program. Gerald wants to go to college and study computer science. When he first joined YEP Gerald had his sights set on becoming an astronaut. Now he has different plans: “I want to be a software designer, a game designer.”

Landrea’s Story

Primary Program: Trafigura Work and Learn Center

“I would be sitting at home right now,” is how Landrea feels she would be spending her time if YEP was not a part of her life. The 19-year-old graduated from YEP’s Trafigura Work and Learn Center job training program in November of 2015 and is now a part-time employee at the bike shop. After completing the six-week employment readiness course, Landrea is now well-versed in customer service and bike repair, and says her confidence skills have blossomed thanks to the program. However, it was not an easy transition for Landrea, who had trouble showing up to class at high school. With encouragement from YEP staff and her teachers, Landrea graduated from The NET Charter High School and today she continues to gain valuable job skills working at YEP. She is also preparing to pursue her postsecondary education. “YEP helps young kids get a job. Sometimes if they go out on a job interview, people tell them they can’t get a job and then they give up. But YEP helps them get a job and go back to school,” said Landrea. As Landrea looks to the future she is considering a profession in childcare or cosmetology.

Darren’s Story

YEP Staff Member & Alumni Primary Program: NOPLAY

Darren Alridge has been an incredible asset to the YEP community since he joined our team in 2009. He joined us at age 18 to work toward earning his GED, upon referral from his judge. Then, in 2011, he joined YEP staff as a paraprofessional who helps New Orleans youth prepare for the HSET (formerly GED) exam, as he has “seen the need of some of the youth I work with,” and has chosen to work with YEP because it “makes me happy to give back to my community.”

Darren believes being a YEP Alum-turned-Staff member is important for current YEP participants because some youth do not have close family, or family invested in their lives. YEP is able to help these young people on a day-to-day basis and provide access to resources. His words of reflection: “Stay focused and keep your head up and good will come to you.” His favorite experience with YEP has been flying to Washington, D.C. to visit the White House – it is a moment he will never forget.
City Increases Funding for Pump and Drainage Maintenance

Data News Staff Edited Report

For nearly a month, conversations about the City’s Pump and Drainage System have been at the top of every conversation. After the events of the August 5th flood, the City has bunkerized down on the truth and funding behind the pumps.

On Friday, August 18th, The City of New Orleans announced that it would allocated $26 million in additional drainage improvements. The upgrades include catch basins, early warning system for under passes, and the maintenance of the current pump and drainage systems.

According to the City of New Orleans, “The money coming from the City’s fund balance will include $7.8 million to the Department of Public Works (DPW) for catch basin and drainage point repairs, $3 million to Homeland Security for disaster preparedness, $650,000 to Homeland Security for underpass flood early warning system, and $500,000 to Chief Administrative Office for Root Cause Analysis. Additionally, bond funds that were committed to other road projects will provide $14.2 million for catch basin and drainage point repairs making the total $22 million.”

As of August 22nd, the City of New Orleans reports that 105 out of 120 pumps are available for use during the event of heavy rain.

Mayor Mitch Landrieu said that he hopes for the Department of Public Works to maintain its average of learning 4,263 catch basins per year. Those basins serve roughly 48 miles of drainage. The City has four vacuum trucks used for Catch Basin Cleaning.

The August 5th flooding heavily impacted Treme’, Mid-City, and Gentilly residents and businesses.

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Chief Keitoe has traveled a long road to get to this point in life as a man, as a Big Chief and as a leader in this culture. As chief will tell you, in his journey he has come across a lot of haters. I’m talking the type of haters that transform from decade-to-decade assisting in the overall iron sharpening iron trials and tribulations one goes through to reach their ultimate goal in life. The unique aspect of Big Chief Keitoe is his resilience. Chief has lost tribal chiefs that have resulted in tribes disbanding. They are Chiefs spirits that are so strong they have held tribes of 40 or more men and woman together when that chief dies the tribe dies. As New Orleansi, we are exposed to a lot of death, but I argue not many have had so many deaths that directly affect the practice of their culture. In a way where it pulls you away, pulls you down and takes your energy. It takes a certain type of individual to lose wife, mother, brother, and more than a few mentors and Big Chiefs and still keep going. Every time he masked he is reminded and empowered by them all at the same time! Big Chief Keitoe has been honored many of times but being honored by your peers is something everyone is humbled by. For all the work and hardship endured to sharpen his iron in order for Chief to produce the Black Masking suits of such intricate beading design and leadership Chief will (has) receive the Crystal Feather Award. An honor well-deserved. Hopefully this article gives a little insight on the Chief and his road to glory.

Q) When did you start masking?
A) I was 14 years old in the early 70's, I masked as a spy boy for the 9th Ward Hunters under Big Chief Rudy.

Q) Who gave you your style of beading?
A) I really got my particular style from an Old Chief, 2nd Chief of the White Eagles. His name Felton Brown he used to live in the Desire Project. I was going to Carver School then, he taught me the technique of the flat bead work using tens. They are small seed beads. A lot of guys like to use eights which is a bigger bead it helps you get finished faster. But me I like to use tens and eighens because I like to detail my work.

Q) Chief I see your bead work is so detailed and outlined. How do you achieve this?
A) Small Beads a lot of color because that’s what the streets is looking for, the people looking for something to see. I’m always trying to bring a new look to the streets. When you see me, you gonna see that work. I’m always bringing something to the table for you to see.

Q) What award are you receiving this year?
A) I’m bout to receive the Crystal Feather Award which will induct me into the Mardi Gras Indian Hall of Fame. Crystal Feather Awards is one of these prestigious awards that all the chiefs get together and vote for you. It’s the Chiefs in New Orleans that pick the next Chief out to be honored for the award...and bruh I’ve been waiting so long! I just can’t understand how they took so long. They skipped over me, and I’m the baddest Big Chief in New Orleans other than Tootie Montana son Daryl. Like I’m said they got them hater but I just stayed humble and I’m still humble. I feel good about it, it let me know I’ve gotten somewhere. I’ve been somewhere and I’ve gotten some-
Solar Eclipse Viewing at Xavier University

Harvey Brown
Data News Weekly Contributor

On August 21st, a partial solar eclipse was visible in New Orleans. In celebration of the natural phenomenon, the Xavier University of Louisiana Physics Department held a group viewing in front of the Norman C. Francis Academic Science Complex. Several students had the opportunity to view the eclipse through special telescopes and provided solar glasses. The next solar eclipse visible in the United States will occur on April 8, 2024.
What Kind of Slide are You?

The world of comfort and fashion collide in the form of slides: a flat cushion like shoe that's as simple as sliding your foot through. Slides have been around for quite some time as workout, comfort, or house slippers. Today, you may find them with bows, diamonds, and even fur. Common brands, such as Nike, and even the most high fashion of brands, such as Gucci, have jumped into the slide game. So which slide are you?

Fur Slides: Fur slides are one of the coziest slides and the most popular. However, the grip on the fur slides aren't as tight as a sports slide. The fur on the slides comes in all different colors—even tie die. They can be found at beauty supply stores for cheap. And, for the more high-end fur, look at designers such as Rihanna for more of a stylish touch.

Sports Slides: Sports slides won’t be the most fashionable but they will be the most comfortable. Fur slides have a strong grip thanks to its ridges and tight flaps. While Nike is your goto brand for sport fits, places like Walmart and Kmart sell sports non-name brand slides for less.

Designer Slides: Gucci, Fendi, and Kim Kardashian all have custom slides of their own. Most designer slides are extremely expensive but are commonly the perfect mixture of stylish and comfort. Most have cool writing and designs on them, some just have the brand logo. Gucci slides have increased in price after Rapper Future advertised them in a song referencing "Gucci Flip Flops".

Slides are for anytime of the year. They can be worn with or without socks as long as they're the perfect pair for you. So what type of slide person are you? Email your favorite slide to Delinkey@yahoo.com for a chance to be posted on Data's social media. For more information email Delinkey@yahoo.com.

Delaney George
Columnist
Katrina Reflections

It is again that time of the year when we reflect on the days that changed our lives forever. It was a dozen years ago that we experienced Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath of the levees breaching, leaving many stranded-on rooftops, the Superdome, and the Convention Center drowning in a sea of misery and facing an uncertain future. As I look around 12 years later much is changing in our great City; and these are truly as stated in the ‘Tales of Two Cities’ the best of times and the worst of times. Walking, driving or biking around the City we are witnessing a renaissance where we see pockets of progress, but conversely only a few blocks away there is often wreakage as if Hurricane Katrina happened yesterday; reminding us that we still have a long way to go in our recovery.

New Orleans: A Divided City

As we are on the verge of the eve of the New Orleans Saints beginning their season and the unity and camaraderie that we have around the boys in black and gold; this fall we will have our local elections. This October is important because we will decide who will lead us and hopefully help bridge the historical divide between Black and White and rich and poor in our City. In these times we are living we must ask ourselves how far we have come since the days of Ray Nagin and his Chocolate City remarks, which some considered divisive? And unfortunately accept the stark reality that today much hasn’t improved as we are still facing a racial divide in our City over Confederate Statues and a host of other issues that’s keeping citizens separate and unequal.

Measuring Progress: The Ballot and Your Bank Account

With a smaller population post-Katrina of 391,000 New Orleans is still a majority Black City at 60% according to the U.S. Censuses. And while this can equal political power it does not always translate into economic opportunities for African-Americans. This is something that must be placed on top of the agenda for those who elect this fall. As a community, we must move away from the politics of symbols and more to substance. This is not to suggest that we are not competent to lead for we undoubtedly have people more than capable who are fit to lead. But no longer can we consider progress as simply having an African-American Mayor, majority Black City Council etc.; while the economic reins of power continue to lie in the hands of a few that in many instances happen to be White. So, the question we should be asking ourselves as a community moving forward is where do African-Americans fit into the power equation of the “New” New Orleans and how do we measure success?

Education and the Future of New Orleans

Also after Hurricane Katrina what we have seen is a dismantling of public education and our children being made into pawns for profit. Yes, there was undoubtedly a

Commentary, Continued on page 9.

John Slade
WBOK 1290AM

Some of you may remember the Cold War between the superpowers as a real thing. The threat of nuclear war was something that worried adults and scared children. A few days ago, I was at my favorite watering hole discussing current events with a young lady who was serving me. She happened to mention as a real thing. The threat of nuclear war was something that worried adults and scared children. A few days ago, I was at my favorite watering hole discussing current events with a young lady who was serving me. She happened to mention as a real thing. The threat of nuclear war was something that worried adults and scared children. A few days ago, I was at my favorite watering hole discussing current events with a young lady who was serving me. She happened to mention as a real thing. The threat of nuclear war was something that worried adults and scared children. A few days ago, I was at my favorite watering hole discussing current events with a young lady who was serving me. 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The threat of nuclear war was something that worried adults and...
RTA to Implement Complete Closure of Canal & City Park Ave Intersection on August 28th

Data News Staff Edited Report

The RTA is currently constructing the Cemeteries Transit Center to build a greatly improved transfer center on Canal Boulevard north of City Park Avenue. Effective August 28, 2017 the two lanes of downtown bound Canal Street traffic currently available to motorists will be completely closed.

Lane Closures Effective August 28, 2017 thru November 2017

No thru downtown bound traffic lanes will be available from City Park Ave.

No eastbound thru traffic lanes will be available on City Park Ave between the I-10 Service Rd. and Canal St.

No westbound thru traffic lanes will be available on City Park Ave beyond the intersection of Bienville St. and City Park Ave.

No thru downtown bound traffic lanes will be available on Canal Blvd beyond the intersection of Canal Blvd and Rosedale St.

Suggestions for Motorists:

Driving from Metairie to downtown New Orleans on I-10, to avoid construction site closures avoid City Park Ave exit, instead continue to Carrollton/Tulane exit.

Driving from Metairie to downtown New Orleans on I-610, exit at Canal Blvd/West End and continue to destination.

Driving from Downtown New Orleans to Metairie on I-10, avoid I-10 entrance on City Park Ave.

Driving to Canal Street from City Park, use N. Carrollton Ave/Tulane Ave exit to get onto I-10. Use Canal Blvd/West End exit to get onto I-610.

For any questions about the project or assistance on how to navigate around #NOLA during the construction, please call the Cemeteries Transit Center Project Hotline at 504-620-0036.

We encourage citizens to get general RTA information from the only official sources by calling our Rideline at 504-248-3900, visiting www.norta.com, or following us on social media @NewOrleansRTA.

RTA expects to complete its Cemeteries Transit Center by November 28, 2017.

WE LAUNCHED OUR NEW WEBSITE!
Check It Out at LADatanews.com
Hear from Several Mayoral and City Council Candidates in Upcoming Forum

City Government Elections are only weeks away. In preparation for voting, The Baptist Pastors Conference of Greater New Orleans and Vicinity will hold a Mayor and City Council Candidate forum at Second Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. The forum will take place on Friday, September 1st. Door open at 6:30 p.m., and the event is free and opened to the public.

“We are excited about this event because it offers the citizens of the Greater New Orleans area a window into the legislative and tactical strategies of each of the candidates in a way that will allow them to vote and support from an informed position,” said Reverend Robert Myers, Moderator of the Baptist Pastors Conference in an official release.

At the forum, Mayoral Candidates will have five to seven minutes to explain his or her platform and City Council Candidates will have two minutes. The Conference will release its official endorsement proceeding the event.

The upcoming forum will not be moderated and candidates will not pose questions for debate. The forum will be held for informational purposes only.

Dick Gregory Dies at 84

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Legendary Civil Rights Activist and Comedian Dick Gregory died on Saturday.
He was 84.

Friends, family and celebrities took to social media to honor the icon and innovator of the Black community.

“It is with enormous sadness that the Gregory family confirms that their father, comedic legend and civil rights activist Mr. Dick Gregory departed this earth tonight in Washington, DC,” said Christian Gregory, his son, in a statement posted on Facebook. “The family appreciates the outpouring of support and love and respectfully asks for their privacy as they grieve during this very difficult time.”

On Facebook, Roland Martin, a journalist and host of NewsOne on TV One said that he had enormous respect for Gregory.

“He was honest, truthful, unflinching, unapologetically Black. He challenged America at every turn. RIP,” wrote Martin.

“He was one of the sweetest, smartest, most loving people one could ever know,” said Steve Jaffe, Gregory’s publicist of 50 years, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Jaffe added, “I just hope that God is ready for some outrageously funny times.”

Singer John Legend tweeted that, “Dick Gregory lived an amazing, revolutionary life. A groundbreaker in comedy and a voice for justice. RIP!”

Filmmaker Ava DuVernay tweet- ed that Gregory “taught us and loved us.”

Quoting Legendary Entertainer Richard Pryor, Sports Writer Myron Medcalf tweeted, “Dick Jaffe was the greatest, and he was the first. Somebody had to break down that door.”

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, also paid homage to Gregory.

“We salute and honor the liv- ing legacy of freedom fighter Dick Gregory. RIP.” Chavis wrote on Twitter.

Gregory had been in a Wash- ington, D.C. area hospital battling an undisclosed illness. However, as late as Thursday, family mem- bers were said to have been upbeat about his recovery and he even had plans to appear at a show on Satur- day in the nation’s capital.

Born Richard Claxton “Dick” Gregory in St. Louis, Missouri on Oct. 12, 1932, Gregory became a comedian and civil rights activist whose social satire changed the way Whites perceived African- American comedians, according to his biography.

Dick Gregory entered the na- tional comedy scene in 1961 when Chicago’s Playboy Club (as a direct request from publisher Hugh Hef- nert booked him as a replacement for white comedian, “Professor” Ir- win Corey. Until then Gregory had worked mostly at small clubs with predominantly Black audiences (he met his wife, Lillian Smith, at one such club), according to his biog- raphy.

“Such clubs paid comedians an average of five dollars per night; thus Gregory also held a day job as a postal employee. His tenure as a replacement for Corey was so suc- cessful — at one performance he won over an audience that included southern White convention goers — that the Playboy Club offered him a contract extension from several weeks to three years,” Greg- ory’s biography said. “By 1962, Gregory had become a nationally known headline performer, selling out nightclubs, making numerous national television appearances, and recording popular comedy al- bums.”

Gregory’s biography continued: “It’s important to note that no bi- ography of Gregory would be com- plete without mentioning that he and his beloved wife, ‘Lil,’ had ten children, who have become highly respected members of the national community in a variety of fields. They are: Michele, Lynne, Pamela, Paula, Stephanie (a.k.a Xeno- bia), Gregory, Christian, Miss, Ayanna and Yohance.”

While a student at Sumner High School in St. Louis he led a March protesting segregated schools. Lat- er, inspired by the work of leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and organizations such as the Stu- dent Nonviolent Coordinating Com- mittee (SNCC), Gregory took part in the Civil Rights Movement and used his celebrity status to draw attention to such issues as segrega- tion and disfranchisement, accord- ing to his biography.

“When local Mississippi govern- ments stopped distributing Federal food surpluses to poor blacks in ar- eas where SNCC was encouraging voter registration, Gregory char- tered a plane to bring in several tons of food,” the biography said. “He participated in SNCC’s voter registration drives and in sit-ins to protest segregation, most notably at a restaurant franchise in down- town Atlanta, Georgia. Only later did Gregory disclose that he held stock in the chain.”

Gregory’s autobiography, “Nig- ger,” was published in 1963 and it became the number one best-sell- ing book in America. Over the de- cades it has sold in excess of seven million copies. He explained his choice for the title in the foreword of the book, where Dick Gregory wrote a note to his mother, his biog- raphy explained.

“When you hear the word ‘Nigger,’ he said, ‘you’ll know their advertising my book.’”

Through the 1960s, Gregory spent more time on social issues and less time on performing, his biography noted. He participated in marches and parades to support a range of causes, including opposi- tion to the Vietnam War, world hun- ger and drug abuse.

Dorothy Leavell, Chairman of the NNPA and Publisher of the Crusader Newspaper Group said that this was a sad moment and a great loss to America, especially Black America.

This is a sad moment and a great loss to America and especially Black America.

“Dick Gregory was a personal friend, but also a voice for Black America which has now been stilled,” said Leavell. “Dick was also a close friend to the Black Press and the National Newspaper Pub- lishers Association (NNPA).”

Leavell continued: “While we mourn this loss we are grateful for the many contributions he made that have helped us all.”

Chavis agreed.

“Dick Gregory epitomized the rare combination of being an intel- lectual genius and one of our great- est social visionaries,” Chavis said. “The National Newspapers Publish- ers Association deeply mourns the passing of freedom fighter Dick Gregory.”
Congratulations to our Discover the Unexpected (DTU) Fellows!

Discover the Unexpected, presented by the all-new 2018 Chevrolet Equinox in partnership with the National Newspaper Publishers Association, celebrates the impressive achievements of our HBCU student journalists.

Because of our DTU Fellows, summer ‘17 was full of important stories that inform, inspire, and shatter perceptions about African American culture as well as our community.

Don’t miss their stories and videos from this road trip of a lifetime.

#discovertheunexpected

DISCOVER MORE OF THEIR STORIES AT NNPA.ORG/DTU