Youth Venture: An Introduction

Youth Venture

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/as220_root

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/as220_root/1632

This is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ RIC. It has been accepted for inclusion in AS220 Digital Archive by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ RIC. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@ric.edu.
YOUTH VENTURE

An Introduction
An Introduction

What if every young person in our community was a member of Youth Venture? Can you imagine how different everything would be if every teen did his or her part to make the world a more positive place? The fact is, this may become a reality someday thanks to organizations such as this one.

— Why Tease?

www.youthventure.org
"I see Youth Venture as an enormous commitment that I want to take on. I truly believe that I can bring an innovative perspective to this business, and that [Sisters of Essence] will provide a lucrative, successful contribution to the community."

— Sisters of Essence

- Table of Contents -

Mission ................................................. 3
Vision .................................................. 3
History .................................................. 4
Founder ............................................... 5
Board and National Council ...................... 5
Work ..................................................... 6
Impact .................................................. 8
How Youth Venture Supports Young People and Our partners ................. 10
Partnership Model ................................. 12
Youth Venture Stories ......................... 13
Recent Youth Venturer Accomplishments .......... 16
Our Mission

YOUTH VENTURE'S MISSION IS TWO-PART:

- To help every young person nationwide find the courage and knowledge to make a difference with his or her life, and
- To change the way in which society views young people by proving that when given the opportunity, young people have the creativity, resourcefulness, and competency to bring about powerful change in their communities.

We aim to achieve our mission by investing in young people (ages 12-20) as changemakers, by helping them to Dream it. Do it.—to imagine a way of helping others, and then to create and lead “ventures”—organizations, clubs, or socially oriented businesses that make a difference in their communities.

Our Vision

Imagine what a difference it would make in the strength and creativity of society if most adults had developed steadfast self-confidence and the capacity for serving as a changemaker during their adolescence. Youth Venture is building a mass movement of young people who are changing the world by proving to others that young people can and do play a positive role as community leaders. We aim to transform the typical life experience of young people from one of expected passivity and assumed incompetence to one of initiative and capability, challenging traditional perceptions of young people’s capacity to enact positive change.

Our vision is a society where youth initiative is expected, valued, and honored. The resulting energy—especially as youth communities become supportive and help newcomers learn the necessary skills—can in turn provide a huge new human resource. It can serve both the broader community and also greatly enrich how society helps young people grow and learn. By earning community respect, teens can transform themselves and inspire others to recognize the power and potential of young people, the problem solvers of tomorrow and today.
- Our History -

Youth Venture grew out of insights gained through the experience of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public. Ashoka is a global non-profit organization that is developing the profession of social entrepreneurship around the world by investing in extraordinary individuals with unprecedented ideas for change in their communities. Ashoka has now invested in more than 1,200 Ashoka Fellows in 43 countries.

Ashoka studied the work of roughly 400 of its leading social entrepreneurs primarily focused on children and young people, and developed a practical model based on their common lessons. Of these major successful innovations, at least two thirds rely on young people to provide the human resources for their new approaches. Ashoka’s Fellows found that young people, often the only substantial resource available in many parts of the world, mature rapidly through their practical, competence-building involvement in these projects. By removing attitudinal and logistical barriers and helping youth communities develop the necessary competencies, young people can teach, administer, manage, or lead almost anything.

Chairman Bill Drayton founded Youth Venture to put these lessons into action. In the last five years, Youth Venture has piloted programs in the Washington, New York, and Boston metropolitan areas and, over the last year, has expanded to 135 other U.S. communities. We now support over 200 teams and have more than doubled our growth each year.

"Engaging children as volunteers helps bridge the gap in our community. Kids are seen as responsible, caring, and compassionate residents, not just the 'noisy kids down the street.'"

— Jr. ManaTEENs
Bill Drayton has been a social entrepreneur since he was a New York City elementary school student, where he began by launching a series of newspapers. In high school, as an NAACP member, he was actively engaged in and deeply moved by civil rights work. At Harvard he founded the Ashoka Table; and, at Yale Law School, he launched Yale Legislative Services which, by the time he graduated, engaged one third of the student body in helping key legislators throughout the northeast design and draft legislation.

Bill worked as a McKinsey and Company consultant for almost ten years, gaining wide experience serving both public and private clients. For four years, he was Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he successfully "intrapreneured" a series of major innovations and reforms, ranging from the introduction of emissions trading to the use of economics-defined incentives to remove the advantage of delaying compliance. Later he founded and led both Save EPA (an association of professional environmental managers) and Environmental Safety (which helps develop and spread better ways of implementing environmental laws). He also served briefly in the White House, and taught both law and management at Stanford Law School and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

In 1980, Bill founded Ashoka upon the belief that social entrepreneurs deliver the highest leverage and impact society-wide for addressing social problems. Ashoka empowers social entrepreneurs-and their new ideas-with financial backing and a professional framework to help them spread their innovative solutions, individually and collectively.

Bill was elected one of the early MacArthur Fellows for his work, including the founding of Ashoka. Yale School of Management gave him its annual Award for Entrepreneurial Excellence. The American Society of Public Administration and the National Academy of Public Administration jointly awarded him their National Public Service Award, and the Common Cause gave him its Public Service Achievement Award. He has also been named a Preiskel-Silverman Fellow for Yale Law School, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

- Our Founder -

- Our Board -

Youth Venture is grateful for the guidance and expertise its Board of Directors and National Council bring to the organization's growing movement. Board and Council members work hard to ensure that quality venturing opportunities are available to young people nationwide.
- Our Work -

Youth Venture provides a framework that encourages and enables young people to create, build, and lead successfully. We strive to reach and support any young person nationwide who has a dream about how to make a difference, and the dedication to make it happen. We do so by helping them create and lead social ventures that make a difference in their communities. Our Virtual Venturer program, which enables young people to apply directly online, allows us to offer our program to any interested young person across the country. We also build partnerships with local, regional, and national youth-serving organizations to help them further support their youth membership in creative endeavors.

Youth Venture’s approach is an example of a positive youth development program, which, rather than focusing on youth problems, as do traditional deficit-based models, is instead proactive in preparing young people to live successful, competent, and meaningful lives. Further, unlike traditional youth development models that are structured around youth participation in adult-organized initiatives or specific problem behavior-based models, Youth Venture takes the next step by challenging—indeed expecting—young people to lead the way by deciding what needs to be accomplished and then accomplishing it themselves.

Our program model depends upon the following key elements:

VENTURER
Youth Venturers are young changemakers between the ages of 12 and 20 with vision and commitment, willing to provide the leadership and hard work to organize a team, turn their dreams into social ventures, and leave a lasting improvement in their school or community. What turns these dreams into Youth Ventures is that it is the young people themselves who are in charge. Though Youth Venture facilitates, they fashion their ideas into realistic goals, build the organizations, and lead the projects through to completion. A successful Youth Venturer:

- Makes a difference in his/her community.
- Develops an idea and actively controls his/her venture.
- Designs a lasting organization by planning for the future.
- Involves a strong team of young people in his/her work.
- Has clear, attainable goals, a solid plan and budget, and a strategy to evaluate progress and community impact.
- Has the energy and skills to make his/her venture a success.
- Has a Partner and/or Ally committed to the venture’s independence and success.
- Knows right from wrong, and is trust-worthy and responsible.
VENTURE
A venture is an organization a young person starts to make a difference in the community. This could be a community service organization established to tutor children, prevent crime, assist senior citizens, or cleanup the environment. It could be a small business, where teens sell a product or a service that people in your community need. It could be a club, like a newspaper or photography club, or a sports league that allows youth to pursue their interests with their friends. It could be whatever dream young people believe will help shape their world.

PARTNERS
Partners are local and/or national groups who provide the essential organizational framework and identify a “champion” to provide the leadership for Youth Venture programs to take root. We build such partnerships with local, regional, and national youth-serving organizations, providing the champions of each with the model, training, and support to offer our program to the youth they serve. Partners promote the program, engage the youth, recruit, train and pair Allies (individuals who like working directly with young people), raise money for local Youth Venture programming, provide Venturer training courses, hold selection panels, provide seed money to start the ventures, and offer ongoing support. They also support Allies and Venturers by working with school administrators and helping to open doors to local institutions (businesses, media, etc.). Partners are equally committed to leaving youth in charge.

ALLY
An Ally is a person who enjoys working directly with young people and who respectfully helps Youth Venturers—without taking over! Allies serve as advisors to individual teams throughout the course of the venture. Once an Ally is trained by the Partner and paired with a venture team, the Ally becomes the day-to-day contact for Venturers—answering questions, providing advice, removing obstacles, helping teams think through their venture idea, and assisting with the preparation of their application and presentation. Most importantly, Allies encourage young people’s efforts to create without controlling them.

TECHNICAL ALLIES
Technical Allies are people who want to volunteer their experience and expertise to help youth, but may not have the time to be a primary Ally. Technical Allies are available to teams as consultants. They can be contacted by e-mail, telephone, or fax to help answer the questions teams have related to their areas of expertise.

YOUTH VENTURE
Youth Venture is the national organization that brings local Venturers, Partners, and Allies together. Youth Venture provides assistance, direction, materials, national recognition, training, and networks of support to all collaborating groups, though we often rely upon Partners to disseminate our program directly. Youth Venture and our Partners challenge teams of youth to define their goals, to create plans for achieving them, and to demonstrate how their efforts will strengthen themselves, their peers, and their communities. We ensure that young people have the support network they need, the ability to make their own decisions and the opportunity to tell others about their contribution. Youth Venture is enabling young people across the country to Dream it. Do it!
Since the launch of our first Venturers in 1998, Youth Venture has invested in countless young people as changemakers. We are enabling hundreds of young people to take greater responsibility for their lives and communities by providing the assistance they need to create and lead their own organizations. The costs are minimal and the leverage enormous:

- **Individual Impact:** Any young person who has had an idea, built a team, and left a school or community changed knows that (s)he is competent and powerful. Moreover, (s)he has tasted leadership and will try it again and again... and again.

- **Multiplier Effect:** Typically two to four other young people are part of a Venturer’s core team, and between fifteen to more than twenty others may be involved in the venture’s services as volunteers (e.g., tutoring or helping prepare program materials). Thus, each venture has the potential to engage directly up to twenty-five other young people—who, through teamwork, will learn experientially that young people can make a difference. Moreover, each new venture serves many others as clients and acts as a role model for many more who are not directly involved.

By the time five or six such ventures succeed, they will likely have engaged 30 to 60 percent of their grade or other youth community—and there is a good shot at “tipping” that community’s youth culture. Once tipped, an invisible academy of role models, peer expectations, and group competency takes hold—all reinforced by adult behavior changes. Young people taking such initiative are then honored and emulated.

- **Community Building:** Since September 11th, community building and the importance of young people investing in their neighborhoods as the beginning of a lifelong pattern have never been more important. We believe that Youth Venture represents an extremely unique opportunity to bridge social gaps by engaging diverse teams of youth in combating the array of problems in their own communities. Enabling youth to succeed at such an early age in leading their own social ventures ensures that they will remain engaged in their community as they become adult leaders. This virtuous cycle stimulates others to become involved in supporting these ventures until a transformation occurs in the culture of that society and youth are acknowledged as a great human resource capable of bettering their community.
Diversity: So many of our venture teams cross cultural, religious, intergenerational, and ethnic boundaries—young people are teaching ESL and offering tutors for about ten languages, providing art classes to various nationalities, preparing underserved youth for SAT tests, volunteering with the elderly or informing Latinos about organ donation, etc. The future of this country and the world is dependent upon our learning to get along with different people, especially at a young age. From the interaction between Allies and teams to the services provided to various constituencies, our venture teams strongly experience and demonstrate this capability.

Entrepreneurship and Service Learning: The current economic state has demonstrated to so many individuals the importance of being “entrepreneurial.” Youth Venture enables young people to learn entrepreneurship skills experientially, while encouraging them to give back to the community simultaneously.

Responsibility and Civic Engagement: The importance of ethical leadership and responsibility has never been more important. Youth Venture can reinforce these values at a young age. Youth Venture's holistic approach to youth development is extremely effective, as it recognizes the interrelationships among problems and combines the goals of competency building, caring, and civic responsibility. Youth Venture's program goes beyond traditional mentoring relationships in its ability to address developmental needs in the social, academic, and behavioral spheres. We strive to engage youth in positive activities that will not only serve their communities but also equip them with skills they can utilize as they advance to college and the work field. As a result, young people develop increased confidence, autonomy, a sense of belonging and a capacity to affect change, which translates into better academic performance, decreased negative behaviors, longer term civic participation, leadership, and compassion for others.

The ultimate leverage comes in redefining how everyone, young and adult, thinks about and acts vis-à-vis the youth years, by spreading and sharing this experience. Everyone engaged in Youth Venture work can feel the added pride of being a pioneer in this larger movement, and at least a minority will champion the idea. Further, the media will enjoy both a rich flow of positive stories of broad interest and an opportunity to communicate to many more potential youth social entrepreneurs. Through the demonstrated impact of youth initiatives in a growing number of communities across the nation, amplified and accelerated by Youth Venture's advocacy work, the entire society will increasingly see that young people can and do make a positive difference.
How Youth Venture Supports Young People and Our Partners

MATERIALS
Youth Venture has an array of materials aimed at helping Partner organizations assist Venturers as they launch and sustain their ventures.

ADVICE/ACCESS TO A DIGITAL NETWORK OF COLLABORATION
Venturers, Partners, and Allies can tap the experience of others conducting similar work around the country through our digital network and connect with one another through our online chat rooms (www.youthventure.org).

TECHNICAL ALLIES
As young people encounter challenges related to a specific field, they can telephone or e-mail a Youth Venture Technical Ally. We have a directory and online e-mail database, which includes names of volunteer experts available to answer questions in nearly every field imaginable.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES
Youth Venture makes sure Venturers, Partners, and Allies receive the recognition they deserve. We work with local and national newspapers, magazines, radio, and television programs to secure visibility for their work.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION/SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES
Youth Venture looks for awards, scholarships, publicity, conferences, and other educational and recognition opportunities for which we nominate Youth Venturers, Partners, and Allies.
WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING
Youth Venture provides the sorts of training and workshops especially useful for innovative young leaders, Partners, and Allies. Our media training session and fundraising workshops, for example, are geared toward helping Venturers develop the skills they need to continue toward success. These training sessions are delivered locally and on the “Venturers Only” section of our website.

YOUTH VENTURE’S “VENTURES ONLY” WEBSITE
Once selected as Youth Venturers, young people are immediately joined into the growing Venturer network. Our “Ventures Only” section of our website is a zone complete with information and opportunities designed specifically for Venturers.

START-UP SEED MONEY
Often Youth Venturers starting new organizations need modest capital to help them get started. We work with Partners to ensure that Venturers who develop a proposal, successfully present their idea before a Selection Panel and meet the Youth Venture selection criteria receive a grant of up to $1000. Youth Venture teams receive a maximum of $1000 in seed money from the Partner organization and Youth Venture combined.

“Our venture purpose is to bring the community together. Our workshops are not only fun—but also educational.”

— Sugar and Spice
## Our Partnership Model

### Youth Venture Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Program Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture's proven model of collaboration links Venturers, Allies, and Partners to ensure that young people have both the support and independence they need to succeed. We also have the experience to know what added support young people need, and we continue to create such tools for our Venturers. We provide this model to Partners, as well as criteria for effective selection and process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop, Distribute, Refine Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have developed workshops for Youth Venturers, written materials to guide them in their ventures, and promotional materials and advertising that help to raise the profile of Partner organizations. We also have the training, tools, and materials Partners and Allies need to get started.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Access to a Digital Network of Venturers, Allies, Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture's website enables Partners, Allies, and Venturers to link, learn, and collaborate. We host chat rooms, provide materials and special opportunities, and profile the work of key players across the nation. A list of Technical Allies is also available online to assist young people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create Opportunities for and Manage Local/National Media Outreach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have a sophisticated communications team with the expertise and contacts to ensure that both the local and the national media recognize the work of local Venturers, as well as that of Youth Venture Partners and Allies. Our team works to garner continued coverage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Opportunities for Venturer, Ally, Partner Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countless awards, scholarships, and events exist for exceptional young people, volunteers, and organizations. We have helped secure full college scholarships and invitations to exclusive conferences and events for Venturers, as well as national and local recognition for Partner organizations and Allies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish Local Community Councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture establishes councils of Partner organizations for those cities hosting numerous Youth Venture Partnerships. Councils enable these organizations to share resources, collaborate on programs and/or events, impart knowledge and experiences, and communicate with others conducting similar work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Regular Consulting Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture commits to an on the ground visit every six weeks for the first six months of a Partnership. We have the experience and expertise in establishing valuable Partnerships that work, and we want to help your Youth Venture program take root. These regular visits ensure our Partners have the support they need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Partial Funding for Venturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture provides a portion of the seed money—grants allotted to Venturers. Youth Venture teams receive a maximum of $1,000 in seed money from the Partner organization and Youth Venture combined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Links to a Larger Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As Youth Venture's national movement grows, we continue to identify opportunities for participation in national advocacy work, including conferences, events, and policy work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Partner Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify and Recruit Venturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture provides the program and ongoing materials to its Partner organizations. In exchange, the Partner organization identifies and recruits potential Venturers, as well as guides them through the process of becoming Venturers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify and Recruit Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allies provide the ongoing support and assistance to specific venture teams - while still enabling young people to lead. Youth Venture can help identify opportunities for recruiting Allies, but the Partner organization is responsible for recruiting, managing, and monitoring these relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Youth Venture Materials/Support to Venturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture provides the Partner organization with all materials. The Partner is responsible for effective use and dissemination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervise Ally-Venturer Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allies and Venturers regularly report to Partners on the status of their ventures. The Partner assesses this information to determine whether any changes must be made.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Regular Status Reports to Youth Venture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Partner organization provides an initial report to Youth Venture after its first month of program operation. Subsequent reports are provided to Youth Venture on a quarterly basis. An easy-to-answer questionnaire facilitates this process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participate in Monthly Youth Venture Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These calls ensure that Partner organizations receive the regular support and assistance they need. Partners have the opportunity to ask questions, correspond with other Partners, and update Youth Venture on their work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Venturer Selection Panels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Venture provides the tools Partner organizations need to develop a local selection panel, and works extensively with Partners to help prepare for initial panels. Our goal is to help you feel comfortable and confident planning your own panel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Partial Funding for Venturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Partner organization provides a portion of the seed money—grants allotted to Venturers. Youth Venture teams receive a maximum of $1,000 in seed money from the Partner organization and Youth Venture combined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Few Youth Venture Stories

Caring for the Coastal Environment (CCE)

Pacifica, California based Joseph, age sixteen, started Caring for the Coastal Environment (CCE). Motivated by his passion for the environment, Joseph and team members, Paul and Gene created CCE to spread awareness of global and local environmental problems. The Venturers pursue their mission by hosting regular "cleanup" events around local beaches and creeks. CCE aims to change the community habits by building awareness of the local environment. Cleanup sessions focus not only on the removal of waste but also on education. Sessions are designed to inform the community about daily habits that ruin the local environment. By fostering increased conscientiousness among community members, the CCE team aims to protect the local beaches and to facilitate the return of steelhead trout to the local creeks. Through their efforts the CCE team hopes to increase understanding of local environmental issues and to build awareness of global environmental issues within their Pacifica community.

"Youth Venture assists youth in creating and following through on their dreams. The Youth Venture team is always there to help, but never seizes control of your creation—that will always be yours. Thanks Youth Venture, for the opportunity to follow-through on my dreams."

— EXPRESSIONS
**.Expressions**

Brandon started his organization to impart the knowledge he has gained about expressing one's feelings through art. Born 90 percent deaf, Brandon grew up with a speech impediment that deterred him from communicating with others. Brandon was introduced to photography and poetry, and discovered that he could effectively communicate his feelings through these art forms, thereby enabling him to better communicate with others. Now an avid photographer and poet, Brandon founded EXPRESSIONS in December 1998 to teach younger children in his Brooklyn community how to express themselves through these mediums. He holds after-school classes weekly at a local elementary school, where students learn photography and poetry basics and hear guest lectures from professionals in the field. Brandon also plans to start teaching another class devoted to helping young people resolve their conflicts through photography. He now engages forty youth counselors as leaders of EXPRESSIONS workshops. Moreover, Brandon has received a variety of awards and recognitions for his work, including the Caring Institute Award in November 2001. He was also featured recently in Teens With the Courage to Give, Jackie Waldman’s most recent book.

**Respect Our Seniors Everyday (ROSE)**

Baldwin, New York based Taylor, age seventeen, launched Respect Our Seniors Everyday (ROSE) to assist local seniors living on fixed incomes. Taylor strives to establish a food pantry to help lift the burden placed on seniors who struggle to survive on limited resources. Observing a decline in senior citizens’ quality of life, Taylor created ROSE to ensure seniors receive nonperishable food and other essential items. ROSE also aims to bridge the gap between the younger and older members of the community by engaging students as volunteers.

What motivated Taylor to launch ROSE? “Prices are increasing, but the seniors are not earning any money,” she explains. “They are often forced to sell their homes because they cannot afford the high property taxes, as well as food, clothing, electrical, and medical bills.”
Students United For Racial Equity

In February 2002, Palo Alto based twenty-year-old Nina created Students United for Racial Equity (SURE). Growing up as one of the only minority students in her high school, Nina became motivated to create race dialogue sessions after she participated in one herself. Explains Nina: “My goal is to provide a forum for local high school juniors and seniors to explore the significance of race as it is reflected in psychological, social, and economic well-being.”

As part of her venture, Nina created a fourteen-session seminar, in which students meet every other week for two hours to discuss pre-assigned readings and assignments. Nina constructed a syllabus, which provides a detailed agenda for each of the sessions and provides readings, discussion topics, recommended videos, projects, and activities for each session. “SURE is designed to give young people an opportunity to discuss the meaning of race as it presents itself in today’s society; through academic readings and individual research projects, students will explore a more inclusive curriculum,” she explains.

Nina is working with five different high schools in her community, two of which serve as initial pilot sites. Though launching modestly and strategically, Nina’s ultimate goal is to leverage her initial dialogue sessions as a model for replication in schools nationwide.

“Since joining Youth Venture I have learned of countless other projects that young people are launching all over the nation, that are all part of a greater vision of fostering a brighter tomorrow. It has really been extremely inspiring to see all of the work other teens are taking part in.”

— SURE
Recent Youth Venturer Accomplishments

As a result of their venture work, a number of teams have garnered significant recognition since the start of 2002. A sampling includes:

- Four of the top twenty award winners of the Citizens Committee for New York and Fleet Youth Entrepreneur Competition were Youth Venturers honored at a reception by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and participants in a city wide event for young entrepreneurs.

- Three Youth Venture team leaders will begin college this fall thanks to college scholarships offered to them as a result of their venture work.

- Ten venture teams have been invited to deliver a keynote address or be honored for their venture work at a national conference or event.

- One of our Venturers was selected to film a PSA with Champions of Hope, an organization dedicated to encourage service on the anniversary of September 11th that will be broadcast in 5500 movie theatres across the country announcing a United Day of Service. She was also invited to the White House to meet John Bridgeland, Director of USA Freedom Corps, with a group of other community-minded young people.

- One Youth Venturer was selected by Teen People for its April 2002 issue titled, “20 Teens Who Will Change the World.”

- Other teens have been featured, or Youth Venture has been mentioned, in Essence, The Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal Online, the Mary Kate and Ashley website, Rosie online, The Eldorado Sun, The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, The Birmingham News, and Serve New England’s Volunteer Ventures, among others.