



SUMMER REPORT


Two Thousand Fifteen



ACK NOW LED GEM ENT S

#CollaborationIsKey



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In the pages to come, be prepared to delve into the essence of the Success Beyond Limits Summer Program 2015...Collaboration is Key!

As one views the positive statistics, programming elements, special events, and personalized profiles, an element that will become very clear is that the success of SBL involves many people, organizations and institutions.

From being hosted on campus by York University's Faculty of Education, to our partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School (see our section on York U), this demonstrates a thriving collaboration between a post-secondary institution and a non-profit community-based organization. This meaningful union allowed young people to get direct and early exposure to the university environment, while those employed by York received valuable experience working alongside the community in which their institution resides, Jane & Finch.

The students receiving their first high school credit has been quite the memorable experience. One would assume this milestone is solely based on the work of students, however, the SBL staff team, teachers, mentors, parents, and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) all have a stake, and each played a vital role in ensuring the SBL participants walk into their new high schools in September with only 29 credits left to achieve.

Our Westview Mentors, many of whom were our enthusiastic mentees in previous summers, know the value of gaining an early start to high school first-hand. While they are supporting their mentees, many are also earning coop credits towards their own milestone of high school graduation, while being employed for the summer. Behind this double-dose opportunity are the TDSB Continuing Education and Focus On Youth (see our section on the TDSB).

As one peruses the accounts of the summer program, the real story of what took place emerges. It is mentees that have become mentors, and mentors that have grown into recreation staff. It includes teachers that are building community, and funders that have become partners. Also, community members that offer their skills and experiences. Plus, community agencies that want to collaborate rather than compete. It is institutions that see the value of community in achieving shared goals. And of course parents that inspire us all to give our best. Combined, it is a living illustration to the young people involved with SBL on the power and the benefits of collaboration.

Kaneka Watkins
PROGRAM MANAGER



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OUR TEAM

#SBLFamily



Staff: (Left to Right)

Sam Bookye, Sam Tecele, Saraya Elwin, Kaneka Watkins, Mohamed Ahmed, Shanaz Ali, Tesfai Mengesha, Toota Hassaniien, Chris Penrose.



Teachers: (Top to Bottom)

Kirdeen Matthews, Mauricio Araya, Sam Tecele, Rownack Chowdhury, Nigel Hunter, Nastassia Subban, Saraya Elwin, Tesfai Mengesha.

ONE

OUR RT EA M

#SBLFamily



Mentors: (Top to Bottom)

TOP: Samatar Abdi, Corrie Calliste, Olando Blair, Sabrina Gajadhar, Adna Abdullahi, Shaquille Antoine, Raja Manragh, Khadar Hilowle, Gerald Mckenzie, Dwayne Hydol.

MIDDLE: Vanessa Dias, Shivanee Singh, Cawsalya Nithyantharajah, Faduma Awale, Neil Powley.

BOTTOM: Peter Bunkuna, Muna Ali, Kadiatu Barrie, Ishti Paul, Nasteha Mohamed, Tommy Nguyen, Paa-Kwasi Boateng

(Missing mentors from photo: Jauvan Samuels, Mohamed Ali, Vethusha Baskarajah.)



Rec Staff: (Left to Right)

Delano Grant, Winston Luc, Sofia Mohamed,
Akifa Forde.

Two

EVA LUA TIO N



#Results

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE:

97% of students felt that their SBL classroom experience was positive.

94% of students were interested in what they were learning in the classroom during the SBL summer program.

92% of students felt that they could ask their teachers for support, which is inline with the finding that 89% of students felt that completing assignments during the SBL summer program was an easy task.

SUPPORT & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

98% of students developed good relationships with SBL staff (core staff, mentors, teachers).

72% of students felt that they could talk to their teachers about a social/ personal matter.

92% of students felt that they developed strong friendships during the program, and 59% stated they will stay connected to peers they met during the program.

PURSuing POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Following the SBL summer program, 98% of students felt that they will graduate high school and 98% also stated that they want to attend post-secondary education.

Following the SBL summer program, 100% of SBL mentors stated that they will attend post-secondary education.



EVA LUA TION

#Results

CAPACITY BUILDING & EMPLOYABILITY

95% of students felt that they learned a great deal about different careers during the SBL summer program through various career days, guest speakers and exposure opportunities.

Following the SBL summer program, 91% of mentors felt that they are leaders.

95% of mentors stated that they built valuable skills during the SBL summer program that will help obtain future employment.

100% of mentors stated that they feel confident about being able to provide social support for youth in their community.

88% of volunteers felt that they developed skills that can help with future employment.

81% of volunteers stated that they will continue to volunteer in their community.

75% of the volunteers involved in the SBL summer program want to be mentors the following year.

of Students registered on July 2nd



of Students registered at the peak of the program



of Students registered at the end of the program



of Students that received the credit



of Westview students that started the program



of Westview students that finished the program



of Westview students that received the credit



Average Daily Attendance **98%**



of students deemed transfer students and/or identified Westview bound students will require extra support.

QUOTES



#WhatTheTeachersSay

"This is my fourth year teaching in the SBL summer program. Once again I am inspired and energized by what I have experienced. The students, mentors, SBL staff and everyone involved has not only come together for a collective goal but the creation of community. I am honoured to be part of it once again and sincerely hope this program finds its way into other communities in the GTA."

— **MRS. CHOWDRY**
(TEACHER)



"Each student brings their unique gift, talent and personality ready to be ignited...teaching at SBL is more than teaching skills it's teaching character, the character of the successful."

— **MR. HUNTER**
(TEACHER)

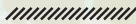
"TEACHING AT SBL IS UTTER JOY. TEACHERS ARE ENTHUSED, STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED. WE TRULY EMBRACE A LIVED CURRICULUM WHERE ALL STUDENTS HAVE A VOICE AND ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE CLASSROOM. LEARNING IS HOLISTIC AND ORGANIC AND IS A TRUE EXAMPLE OF WHAT PUBLIC EDUCATION SHOULD LOOK LIKE."

— **NASTASSIA SUBBAN**
(TEACHER)

"It has been a pleasure to work with SBL both as a teacher and site lead over the last 5 years. This program is one of a kind and it is a true example of how important community partnership is. The teachers and students are engaged in learning and the curriculum reflects the lived experiences of the students. There are not many programs where you find students are eager to attend in the summer and this speaks volumes. SBL feels like home and holds true the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child."

— **SARAYA ELWIN**
(SITE LEAD)

QUOTES



#WhatTheMentorsSay

"SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE FOR ME, FILLED WITH LAUGHTER AND POSITIVITY. FROM THIS OPPORTUNITY I LEARNED 2 THINGS, BEING RESPONSIBLE IS IMPORTANT BUT MOST OF ALL HAVING FUN!"

—SAMATAR ABDI

"Being a second year mentor has allowed me to gain confidence by using my voice more. SBL has always provided that opportunity while also offering both an educational and fun summer experience."

—KADIATU BARRIE

"Being an SBL mentor was critical to my growth. Going through daily challenges while getting support from the program has helped mold me into the man I am today."

—P.K BOATENG



QUOTES

#WhatTheParentsSay

"I love the SBL program! My daughter couldn't wait to go to the SBL summer program everyday and I loved the fact that the SBL program worked with her to build her skills, while having fun at the same time."

— **INDIRA SINGH**
(MOTHER OF ALISHA DHANRAJ)

"THE SBL PROGRAM HELPED MY DAUGHTER ASMAA TO MAKE MANY NEW FRIENDS. SHE LEARNED NEW SKILLS THAT WOULD HELP HER IN THE FUTURE AND I THINK ASMAA COULD DO ANYTHING THAT SHE PUTS HER MIND TO."

— **ZAHRA BARRE**
(MOTHER OF ASMAA MOHAMUD)

"The SBL summer program has been beneficial to my daughter Nyike because of the amount of growth she has shown. If it wasn't for the SBL summer program she would have been at home, but the program gave her the chance to learn and develop throughout the summer. The program is great because they don't do just schoolwork, but they also have fun at the same time. My daughter is now more prepared for high school".

— **DOWELL LINDO**
(FATHER OF NYIKE LINDO)

"THE PROGRAM BENEFITED MY SON A LOT AND GOT HIM READY FOR GRADE 9, WHICH IS SOMETHING I REALLY APPRECIATE. I WOULD LOVE FOR HIM TO BE PART OF THE PROGRAM NEXT YEAR, AND BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERIENCE HE WANTS TO BECOME A MENTOR WITH THE SBL PROGRAM. I WISH I KNEW ABOUT THIS PROGRAM SOONER!"

— **ARETHA MCKENZIE**
(MOTHER OF TENACIOUS HALL)



SPECIAL THANKS

#SBL

Board of Directors

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Visionary, supportive, and committed are words that can describe the SBL Board of Directors. Membership ranging from the fields of education, law, recreation, and research, they bring both professional skills and deeply personal passion to our programming. Of the qualities that have meant the most to the work we do, is the value they place on the youth voice and their decision-making in our organization. To the ideas, initiatives, and proposals that young people in SBL bring forward, our default answer is 'yes', and this is rooted in their leadership.

"SO MUCH FUN, SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES, WE LEARNED SO MUCH!"

These were the voices filling Osgoode Hall at the graduation event celebrating a truly memorable summer program. Under the inspired leadership of the SBL staff team, mentees, mentors, volunteers, together with outstanding TDSB teachers, worked and played together to build the enriched and supportive community that marks SBL in all its endeavours.

Thank you and congratulations from a most appreciative board of directors!

Pat Saul
BOARD CHAIR



OUR PROGRAM A M

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#Programming

Mornings in the Classroom

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Summer 2015 was our third year at Osgoode Hall Law School on York University's campus where over 100 Grade 9 students worked towards earning their first high school credit. In the mornings they spent time engaging in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills.

The morning classrooms were designed to offer support for students while they picked up valuable new skills and experiences. This process was supported by current Westview students who fulfilled the role as Mentors.

The teacher student ratio is 1 teacher for every 15 students with a group of mentors (3-4 per class) working within the classroom together. This is designed to enhance learning and allows the teachers and mentors to adequately address the needs/ exceptionalities of each student. Of the 7 teachers involved in the program, 6 are returning teachers who have built strong relationships with the mentors and staff over the years.

Many of the youth enrolled in the program are transfer students (a student who is transferred to secondary school but has not met the curriculum expectations) and are given the opportunity to learn through culturally relevant pedagogy, with peers within their community, innovative curriculum and wrap around supports within the classroom.



Hip Hop Literacy in the Classroom

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It has been 3 years since SBL first piloted the Hip Hop Curriculum- even before its publication into the new curriculum guide Rhymes to Re-education. Since then, classrooms across Ontario have implemented the curriculum with great success. This summer, SBL brought new lessons into the classroom that engaged youth across a myriad of social justice topics. Lessons ranged from the critical examination of communities with structural differences, to the construction of social identities. With Hip Hop culture at the core of each lesson, students were highly engaged. Teachers used the lessons as starting points, but ensured there was room for student input and up to date cultural references.



On Time & Ready to Learn

We offer transportation for all of our youth in the program. Our youth live in every area of the Jane and Finch community and get picked up at key places such as: Brookview Middle School, Oakdale Park Public School and Firgrove Public School.

Bringing youth from different areas in the community to York University each day speaks volumes to the work we do around community building and breaking down barriers. Getting our SBL youth to York University is definitely a priority and being mobile to the various Friday trip locations is important, especially to the students!



#FuelItUp

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Ramadan

During the summer months, many students and staff were observing the month of Ramadan. For the first 2 weeks of programming, we made it a priority to provide accommodations for those who were fasting. These accommodations included, but were not limited to the following: Providing designated and equipped space to do activities for those who were not eating during the breakfast and lunch periods; providing a prayer space throughout the day; and alternative activities were available during the afternoon.



Supporting Every Learner: Class Sizes

SBL positions students for success by removing potential barriers to academic achievement, while providing much needed supports. A key element in removing potential barriers is the student to support staff ratio. Each classroom was capped at 15 students with 1 TDSB teacher, 3 mentors and 1 volunteer all providing academic support. Along with additional academic support, smaller class sizes enabled deep-rooted relationships between mentors and mentees.

This led to conversations about the anxieties of entering high school, the dos and donts in high school and general relationship advice. It felt less like a classroom and more like a large family where youth are highly engaged and willing to participate in their education – whether it was academics, life lessons or social skills.

Celebrating Excellence: Graduation

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Play Day

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Lost Lyrics

This year SBL had the pleasure of collaborating with Lost Lyrics- a mobile learning incubator that attempts to bridge the gap between the streets and the classroom through relevant and engaging curriculum.

SBL and Lost lyrics partnered to provide photojournalism workshops centered on self-advocacy. Youth engaged in a photo scavenger hunt that allowed them to investigate and explore how photography allows them to share information about their community- through their own lens. Youth began to clearly understand self-advocacy and resiliency by analyzing their community and its conditions.



ArchITEXT

Future Builders is a summer camp run by ArchITEXT, which is focused on introducing young people to the world of architecture. Inspired by the work they are doing, we partnered with them to deliver one of their customized modules in our summer program. ArchITEXT ran a workshop with our teachers and mentors who selected the module on "Drawing as Communication" as the one they would learn together and teach collaboratively.

The results were remarkable, seeing our mentors delivering the module with our teachers, each putting their own voices into the lesson, while illustrating the fact that the principles of architecture apply to many areas of life (and are a lot of fun).

LAW'S:

Exposure is ultimately one of the core elements that adds to the success and value of the SBL program. Each year SBL partners with the LAWS program to deliver engaging programming around the justice system, critical thinking and building exposure around legal professions. Students get the opportunity to experience the intricacies of our judicial system first hand through mock trials.

In addition, youth engage in workshops that provide them with the tools and resources necessary to make critical decisions, build their confidence and to better understand their own strengths. The students develop vital skills such as problem solving, teamwork and critical analysis- all of which they will use in their schooling and beyond.



Kids-Up-Front: PanAm 2015

As we all know, this was the summer of PanAmania! The city was buzzing with PanAm excitement for a great majority of this season. Through our partnership with Kids Up Front, SBL was able to provide over 250 tickets to the various 2015 PanAm sporting events to the youth and their families involved in the program!

We are aware that several barriers often leave the youth and families in the community disconnected from the initiatives taking place across the city (especially in the downtown core). The access provided to the PanAm events through Kids Up Front however, provided the opportunity for youth and their families to reconnect to their city, build relationships and meaningful memories.



Jays Care Community Club House

The Jays Care Foundation is one of the primary supporters of our summer program, and as grantees we are given the opportunity to attend a Blue Jays game in the Jays Care Community Club House each year. On June 30th, thirty-five SBL mentors and staff cheered the Blue Jays on to victory.

With our summer program starting only a few days later, it was an incredible way to bring our team together and celebrate the success ahead of us with one of our great partners. We say this every year (because it always gets better), but this was the best time we had in the Jays Care Community Club House!



3D Printing Workshop: Toronto Public Library & Fort York Library

When we heard that the Toronto Public Library had 3D printers, we knew we had to find a way to connect to this amazing resource. As a part of our morning programming, each of our seven classes attended a workshop at either the Fort York or Toronto Public Library sites where they were given an introduction to 3D printing and a chance to turn an idea on a computer screen into a tangible piece that they could take home. This was a great opportunity to continue to build on the work we have been doing as a part of the HIVE Toronto network, prioritizing digital literacy and closing 'the digital divide'.



Virginia Beach to Jane & Finch

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This summer, two classes had the unique opportunity to play Jeopardy against students from Virginia Beach. In partnership with Everfi, the PK Subban Foundation and From One Hand to Another (Pharrell Williams' Foundation) students spent time preparing for the Jeopardy Style Hockey Themed Trivia Challenge and we are proud to say SBL came out on top in the hockey themed trivia.



Special Visit: P.K Subban

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Shortly after the cross border Jeopardy game, PK Subban surprised the entire program with a visit and swag (new PK t-shirt, water bottle and Gatorade) lighting up the faces of all the students, mentors, and teachers. Osgoode Hall Law School and York were abuzz with excitement and energy!



Exposure: Career Day

Success Beyond Limits Summer Program 2015 was another successful summer where we had a diverse set of guest speakers from different backgrounds. They brought life, experience and wisdom into the space and for that we are grateful. We had speakers from a wide array of career avenues such as media, non-profits, and education.

We want to give a very special thanks to the following speakers who came out and devoted their time to the youth in the program; Mawuli Chai, Segun Akinsanya, Zakaria Abdulle, Dula Osman, Ameen Binwalee, Sherese Bleary, Jaime Sutherland, Louis March, Kadeem Reid and Michelle Smith. They all came out and shared their triumphs, challenges and tactics with our youth on how to get ahead.

The sessions were filled with questions from curious mentees who were engaged and ready to absorb the very real life experiences being shared, thus, preparing the mentees all the more ready for the challenges of life and high school. Career day is integral to the success of the summer program as it allows the youth to see and relate to people from similar circumstances that made success out of their individual and collective challenges.



Learning & Building Through Play:

Friday Field Trips

It is an amazing opportunity to gain a greater love and appreciation for the city we live in. Students and staff look forward to each Friday, and not because it's the start to the weekend but each Friday we went on a field trip to various locations. The whole program received an opportunity to bond while travelling to; Richmond Hill for bowling and again for the wave pool; Etobicoke for go-karting; North York to roller-skate; and downtown for a day of fun and a BBQ by the lakeshore.



Movie Days

The Nat Taylor Cinema in York U has been our get away place each Thursday afternoon to screen films of interest for our youth. Watching any film with 150 people that you know day in and day out can be an interactive experience. From the serious moments in the film to the laugh out loud moments; our youth made it clear that having an afternoon to sit down, relax, and enjoy a good film can go a long way in a packed summer program experience.



SBL & YouthRex:

Evaluation is a key component for not only telling our story- but telling it the right way. This year SBL has had the opportunity to work with Youth Rex- an organization dedicated to ensuring youth voice is captured to develop a comprehensive, specific and relevant evaluation. This partnership allowed us to strengthen our evaluation process and develop a deeper understanding of our reach.

SBL core staff and YouthRex worked collaboratively in developing valid and reliable measures and means to not only uncover but to also convey the success of the summer program.

“Many of us at YouthREX have had several years of experience with Success Beyond Limits and we’ve enjoyed working with the great people at SBL over the summer to bring their evaluation to action. SBL has always been a leader in the grassroots sector when it comes to pushing the possibilities for using research to improve the well-being of youth.” Alex Lovell- Director, Research & Evaluation YouthRex

We look forward to continuing this partnership throughout the school year- and to continue telling our story!



Debrief Week

After six-weeks of the summer program, mentors spent an additional week reflecting back on the summer and provided valuable insights from their perspectives. Feedback from the youth is essential to ensuring that the summer program is indeed youth led and engaging- and it is this vital feedback that debrief week aims to extract.

Additionally, this year, mentors took part in a workshop that required them to set goals for the upcoming year. Each of their objectives looked very different as some mentors are off to post-secondary school, others returning to high school and some also entering the workforce. Wherever they decide to go, SBL staff will surely check in and see the progress they're making - ensuring they stay connected to the program and its supports.

The end of debrief week saw mentors trekking across the City of Toronto on our second annual scavenger hunt. The evening wrapped up with a dinner recognizing the hard work put in by all the mentors this summer.



Space Matters: Osgoode Hall Law School

All of the program elements that make our summer program what it is (from nutrition and transportation, to our teachers, credits and mentors) combine to have great impact through one key ingredient: space.

Every morning our students filed into the light filled hallways of the Osgoode Hall Law School. The view over breakfast and lunch was Black Creek, with the skyline of the Jane strip in the background. Anyone that has taken or worked in summer school can testify to the importance of air conditioning (or the lack thereof) on learning and motivation. Access to comfortable temperature spaces, state of the art classrooms, tutorial rooms, and assembly areas allowed us to deliver on the ideals of differentiated instruction, and set a tone of excellence. Beyond the attributes of the physical space, there has been the impact of Osgoode staff, students and faculty members embracing our students and staff as a part of the Osgoode community.



YCEC Summer Institute 2015: The Social Determinants of Education: Redefining the factors that drive educational success



York Center for Education & Community (YCEC), a valued partner of SBL, combines a focus on education and community which is a practice that SBL embodies. The monthly contributions and knowledge sharing between SBL and YCEC happens throughout the school year with an emphasis on planning YCEC's yearly summer conference. The two day conference that includes workshops and panel discussions allow presenters and all in attendance to receive information of various practices to enhance their professional development and to build on the collaboration between community and education.

From August 27th-28th SBL sparked thought provoking conversations regarding how our education focused programming is rooted on assisting youth to mitigate the outside factors that are negatively impacting their ability to focus on their schooling and achieve consistent, positive educational outcomes.

In hopes to illustrate the social determinants of education, the connection between the roles these factors have on students' educational success was presented by SBL staff. This allowed the audience to critically participate and assist in developing a plan towards a more well-rounded approach for addressing student achievement.

On the final day of the conference SBL Program Manager, Kaneka Watkins engaged in an educational dialogue sitting on a panel with the Deputy Minister of Education, George Zegarac, Durham District School Board Director, Matryn Beckett and TDSB Principal, Alison Gaymes San Vicente. With a focus on equity and inclusive education, critical conversations on; school-community partnerships, closing the achievement gap and bringing awareness to aboriginal issues were discussed. Following the panel's presentation, the Honorable Jean Augustine provided the audience and panel members with a dynamic response leaving all with the sentiment that we are not where we should be, but we aren't where we were.



TDSB Partnership

Our summer program can be compared to a watch; on the surface you see the face and the hands moving, keeping time, but behind that face and those arms that turn continually is a complex arrangement of gears and mechanisms that make it all happen.

Our partnership with the Toronto District School Board is a key part of what drives our work forward, and the parts are as numerous as those gears, and reach throughout the school board to make the opportunities we provide possible.

Westview serves as our year-round home, and the launching pad for the summer program every year. The support of Westview takes place in many forms as; the Urban Priority High Schools' funds removes key barriers to participation, the staff of the school play an important role in ensuring we have the students that need to attend SBL are engaged, and the administration continue to have a strong presence with us throughout the summer.

Our feeder schools, Brookview and Oakdale Park Middle School, work with us tirelessly in engaging grade 8 students as they are preparing to begin their secondary school careers.



TDSB Continuing Education have been vital in the innovations we have developed from small class sizes, to the full-credit we offer in-coming grade 9 students, and the dual-coop credits our youth mentors are able to earn while employed.

The TDSB Focus on Youth program provides us with the backbone of our program – our youth mentors – through the summer employment provided to students in Jane and Finch. The support of transportation, nutrition, and small class sizes from Focus on Youth were fundamental to the success of our summer program.

Support of our local Superintendent Jackie Spence, our Trustee Tiffany Ford, the partnership and research departments were key in engaging so many of the arms within the TDSB that make what we do possible, and we thank the many tireless supporters throughout the TDSB.



York U Partnership

York University and Jane and Finch are one physical community, and as the nearest post-secondary campus to our community, running our summer program at York is important to the goals of our program, including exposure for our mentees to the post-secondary environment before even starting high school.

Our host on campus and partner from day one is the York U Faculty of Education. From navigating the process of booking amazing spaces across the university, providing access to resources on campus, to engaging us in the York Centre for Education and Community Summer Institute, they commit countless hours to making it all work.

In 2013, we moved our program to the Osgoode Hall Law School. Since then, this partnership has grown exponentially, welcoming us into the Osgoode community, while contributing to greater impact in our program.

York U Community Relations, the York U TD Centre for Engagement and Community, the Art Gallery of York University, the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, the Faculty of Health, the Faculty of Fine Arts, and Tait Mackenzie all find ways to make our presence on campus meaningful.



Our charitable trustee, the York University Faculty Association provides access to important resources, while contributing to the growth of our organization.

The York University Faculty Association Community Projects has been a supporter of our work since it was first piloted in 2006, and have been fundamental to exploring and testing many of the innovations that we have implemented over the years.

While this seems extensive, our relationship with York U is only going to grow from here. In the meantime, we wish all of our SBL Alumni that will be new York students in September success as they work their way toward becoming York Alumni.



Mentor Training

Our mentors bring with them various personalities and skills to the role. Before the camp starts rolling, it was vital to get this group of mentors familiar with each other, as they would be working alongside one another for 6 weeks during the summer.

SBL staff and partner agencies collaborated to present half a dozen sessions and workshops centered around classroom management, being an effective mentor, conflict mediation, summer role and responsibilities, mentor and teacher orientation, program planning, and health & safety.

The mentors were also given decision-making power in program areas such as deciding which afternoon activities we will have; what trips will we go on; the lunch menu; and providing ideas for classroom strategies for teachers to get students engaged. A highlight during the time that was spent from March to June was the social outings that provided the glue to keeping this group strong throughout the summer program!



Getting Ready for Another Amazing Year: Head Start Day

This year on September 2nd, hundreds of 9 students entered the front doors of Westview Centennial Secondary School to experience a glimpse of their new high school.

Westview Administration did a remarkable job at ensuring that every student felt valued and welcomed with open arms. Senior students and SBL mentors led tours to the classrooms, departments and facilities within Westview. Students were also informed of the various clubs and student associations that they can get involved with during the school year.

SBL staff, mentors and volunteers greeted the students as they came thru the front doors, and supported Westview administration in the execution of the day. This day became not only one of easing anxiety, and familiarizing the youth with their new school- it was also a day for many of the students and SBL staff to reminisce on the memories and friendships built throughout the summer program.



PR OF IL E



#SBLCommunity

Mentor Profile: Sabrina Gajadhar

Sabrina Gajadhar is a senior mentor in the program. She is always smiling and brings a positive light to her role as a mentor. Her radiant energy and affectionate personality makes her another favourite in both the classroom and the afternoon program. Sabrina credits SBL for providing her with so many opportunities for growth and development as she embarks on the next steps of her educational journey at York University.

Building on her passion for art and the skills she has developed as an SBL mentor relating to program planning and facilitation, Sabrina will be facilitating weekly art sessions in SBL's programming throughout the school year. While she is a new Westview graduate, she is excited to return to share her love of art and all the knowledge and experience she has accumulated over the years as a leader at Westview and in the SBL program.

Staff Profile: Mohamed Ahmed

Mohamed Ahmed's journey with SBL started from the very beginning as he was one of the founding members of the organization. One of the core staff with the program, Mohamed's role as the Academic and Social Coordinator (ASC) has him engaging with youth, parents, and teachers to ensure the educational success of SBL students. A primary piece of Mohamed's work, meeting with the teachers and staff of Westview is quite an amazing position for him as he himself is a graduate! Being an alumni of Westview has really added to his ability to relate to the youth in our program and assist them in navigating their high school experience.

While contributing to the shaping and development of SBL from the start in 2010, Mohamed has shown great dedication to the organization and his personal educational growth as he has completed his Bachelors and Masters of Education Degrees. Although a honorary Information Technology degree is in order as through his years with SBL, Mohamed has expanded his skill sets to ensure SBL's website and social media is on point! His ability to combine both the practical and theoretical aspects of working with youth is definitely a strength of Mohamed's.

However, those who know him can also attest to his strong relationship building skills as his funny demeanour and his nature to go the extra mile to ensure that he is always available for the youth is truly special. This sentiment is further supported by Mohamed as he states, "SBL has been my home for a long time and I have grown to love it. The staff and youth in the program have become my family as I grow with them through the exciting and challenging moments. I give my all to this organization because I am empowered by the important role it plays in the Jane and Finch community."



BEYOND LIMITS
twentyfour

SUCCESS

PR OF IL E



Recreational Staff Profile: Sofia Mohamed

Sofia Mohamed's journey with SBL began in 2010 as a volunteer at Westview - a familiar starting point for many future mentors, recreational staff and students. As the school year progressed Sofia's leadership skills and unique enthusiasm flourished. The summer of 2011 she secured a mentor position and became an official part of the SBL family. In her words, "SBL means a lot of things to me. It's support beyond measure, a family of different people that care about the youth and our community and a place to simply be yourself. SBL allows you opportunities you might not have had access to and it is a program that helps with learning and personal growth. It's more than just a summer program as the people you meet and the relationships you built will stay with you forever."

Away from home, Sofia is in her fourth year at McMaster studying Life Sciences. She says, "I hope to be a researcher, but the possibilities are endless. I hope to show those in my community that anything is possible. Obstacles can come your way, but they won't be there forever."

Given her outstanding leadership and mentorship over the years, Sofia came back this year as recreational staff - a role that saw her supporting her follow mentors. Sofia stresses the importance of our growth model, as she states, "Being a past mentor has helped in guiding the summer mentors because there was a time when I was in their same exact position. I believe it helped me because it made me very relatable and I was able to understand the mentors better. Since experiencing the program from the lens of a mentor before, I knew how crucial communication in a group is and constantly made sure that my entire afternoon group was a part of the decision making process. "

In September, Sofia will be back at McMaster finishing up her degree.

#SBLCommunity

Teacher Profile: Nigel Hunter

Nigel Hunter has been with the program since the beginning in 2010, making him the most veteran teacher among a team of very experienced and dynamic teachers. Nigel is dedicated to returning every summer to the program because he credits SBL for helping him form the core of his teaching philosophy and educational practice. According to Nigel, SBL is a place where "teachers can try new and exciting teaching methods" and where "innovation is not only permitted but encouraged and invited." Recently Nigel became permanent with the TDSB and cites SBL as helping him gain the insight and experience necessary to secure this position.

Repeatedly throughout this summer and every past summer, Nigel is always the one to volunteer to engage new curriculum or teaching methods that are on the forefront of educational practice. This summer, Nigel was one of two teachers to work with Everfi educators to bring a new experience to our students, making SBL Summer 2015 uniquely memorable for our students.



"EACH STUDENT BRINGS THEIR UNIQUE GIFT, TALENT AND PERSONALITY READY TO BE IGNITED... TEACHING AT SBL IS MORE THAN TEACHING SKILLS IT'S TEACHING CHARACTER, THE CHARACTER OF THE SUCCESSFUL."

—MR. HUNTER (TEACHER)

PRO OF THE



#SBLCommunity

Mentor Among Mentor: Kadiatu Barrie

From 2012 Kadiatu has illustrated her focus on personal growth and positively contributing to her community. Going through multiple stages of the SBL growth model, transitioning from mentee to volunteer to her current mentor role has helped to capture her development from Brookview Middle School to Westview. Kadiatu's consistent positive energy shines through her great attitude towards participating in all activities from the classroom to the afternoon activities. Her contagious smile and friendly demeanour sets an example to her mentees and mentor peers to enjoy their six week journey with SBL. These traits of Kadiatu were seen and felt by all as she was voted by her mentor family to represent the 2015 Mentor Among Mentor! This title was well deserved as the SBL staff team also recognized her growth as she received the Mentor Excellence award!

Kadiatu showed her humble nature as she commented on her mentor success by stating, "Winning the mentor among mentor award was a huge surprise but it feels good knowing that my fellow mentors chose me." Entering her senior year in high school this September, Kadiatu has plans to continue her path of achievement as she has highlighted goals to always ensure that her mentees feel supported and to give them positive experiences that will help them to realize that nothing can bring them down.

Student Profile: Ubah Nur

The Success Beyond Limits Summer 2015 Program was Ubah Nur's first glimpse into what she might expect in high school at Westview. When asked to compare her middle school classroom experience to the SBL classroom, Ubah said "the SBL classroom was fun because we were allowed to play music while completing our work and had knowledgeable older SBL mentors that had experience in the schoolwork before". Ubah also says that having the support of her older peers present in the mornings made a lot of difference for her because "having mentors in the classroom made the classroom brighter and they would always make me laugh and smile". Ubah pointed out that having a classroom without mentors would have been boring and that one teacher would not be able to help all the students, but mentors were there to help the teacher and help the students learn.

When asked about what she enjoyed the most about the SBL summer program, Ubah said "the fact that I got to learn new things that I never did before such as Spoken Word, Samba Drumming, and Dance".

The SBL program is Ubah's first summer program experience and she says that the "SBL program is really fun and not like any other program because it gives you your first high school credit, a head start for high school. Going to SBL was fun and is definitely one of my favourite summers". Ubah's positive experience was validated by her peers as she was voted to be one of the valedictorians for the 2015 SBL graduating class!



PR OF IL E



Lights, Camera, Career Exposure: Sariena Luy feat. Anthony Mao

Documenting the summer experience through film and video is not an easy task. Sariena Luy is a young artist who has done a great job telling the SBL story through her camera. She has been a mentee in the past and has volunteered in this role last summer. Sariena is camera ready and has come in with a wealth of experience while only now going into grade 11. Her involvement with the Toronto International Film Festival and the Remix Project has provided her the exposure and space to learn and grow as a videographer. Each week she was responsible for creating and showcasing a weekly slideshow that highlighted the week. Observing the look on Sariena's face every Monday morning in a room with a 150 people watching her video on the big screen was extraordinary in many ways for the staff as we continue to watch her grow.

Anthony Mao is a young volunteer who was a mentee last summer. His role this summer was to support Sariena and gain video and photography experience. Anthony did a great job in filling in the spaces where needed, for example, on large event days such as our play day, having a second person went a long way in seeing what needed to be captured.

The challenging part of the summer was how do you create a final video that is supposed to capture the entire summer experience in a couple of minutes? With the help of Anthony, Sariena was able to do more and answer that question. The graduation was a success and so was the final video. You can check out the video in our YouTube channel along with a short video that highlights our graduation.

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Mentor Profile: Jauvan Samuels

Jauvan Samuels was a former mentee in the program and is now in his fourth year as a mentor with the program. Having moved through all the stages in the program, Jauvan brought a wealth of leadership to his fellow mentors as well as a whole host of experience working with mentees in the afternoon portion of the program. This was made most evident when during our Graduation Ceremony Jauvan received the Student Choice Mentor Award voted on by the mentees.

According to Jauvan, it has been a summer filled with opportunities to demonstrate all the growth and learning he has amassed over his long time with the program. Jauvan said he deeply cares about the program he has dedicated many of his summers to and believes that he couldn't "see him getting to this point without SBL."



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SUCCESS

PROOF OF LIFE



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Recreational Staff Profile: Akifa Forde

Akifa Forde was a mentor for 3 years in the Success Beyond Limits program and was recently hired as her first year as a recreational staff. Akifa has lived in the Jane and Finch community for 11 years and says that "living in this community has not only taught me the value of aiming for and achieving success, but it has also taught me that failure is not an option and any opportunity that I can get to further lead me to obtaining success, I should go for it".

Currently, Akifa is a student in the Community Worker program at George Brown College and decided to return to the SBL program as a recreational staff because "I wanted to teach the mentees and mentors more about their African history". Throughout her time as a recreational staff, Akifa created and led her own African Heritage workshops that were engaging and fun, which also left the mentees and mentors encouraged and inspired. In addition to her role as a recreational staff giving her with opportunities to lead workshops, it also provided her with the finances needed to cover her tuition costs for September.

Finally, being a mentor from last year has provided her with special insight and influences on how she approached and worked with the 2015 SBL mentors.

Akifa says that her first year as a recreational staff was "a good experience because I was there to support and learn from the mentors and mentees".

Volunteer Profile: Vanessa Bonsu

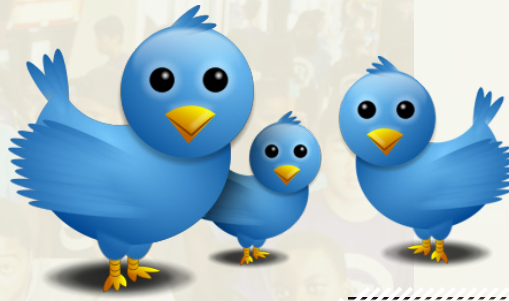
This young woman was one of our many shining volunteers who the organization called back without hesitation when things got really busy in the summer program. She was so impressive in terms of her clerical and interpersonal skills, and how she conducted herself when speaking to parents. Vanessa throughout the summer proved to be a very proactive young woman who displayed her leadership skills in diverse ways.

For example, when it came to getting volunteer duties done she continually ensured that the other volunteers were on time, on task, and things got done in a timely fashion. SBL is supportive of this young up and coming leader, and we will continue to nurture her skills as she grows with the SBL family. Goooooo Vanessa!



twentyeight

ME DI A



NHL Insider

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Tuesday, 07.28.2015 / 4:52 PM / NHL Insider

By Mike Brophy - NHL.com Correspondent

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successblfj Everyone plays a role in getting ready for our graduation tomorrow. Former mentor, and now SBL rec staff Winston, rallying his team of mentors to finish strong. #mentorship #collaboration #tsb #JaneFinch #OsgoodeHallLawSchool #YorkUniversity #SBL2015



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successblfj Louis March and #zeroviolence movement coming through #SBL2015 treating youth in Finch as the experts they are



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successblfj Crazy talented delegation from #SBL2015 at the #OVO #Summit this week. Thanks for making us an event partner: @gavattista held down a hosting marathon w @ovo40 @virgilablon + @jumpman23 own Reggie Saunders. It's about the #journey - so much #wisdom S/o @theremixproject

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