



**SUMMER  
REPORT 2017**

# Acknowledgments.



Our summer program has become a community tradition. For the youth and their families who embark on our 6-week journey, they've built expectations that we feel our summer program has lived up to each year. We would like to share this experience with you through our annual summer report. This summer marks the 8th year of continued success towards helping young people transition into high school and beyond.

The "How To Model" to Becoming Your Own Hero, which is this year's theme, can be answered through the course of 6-weeks. We can break it up into three important parts. The first part of that answer is community growth, more specifically our growth model. This year we had one of our longest standing teachers become our Site Lead. Mrs. Subban led the charge with a group of passionate teachers towards the goal of delivering 110 credits to a new group of youth. We've had 2 former mentors step up into the roles of Recreational Staff who are responsible in mentoring our young mentors.

The second part to Becoming Your Own Hero is to acknowledge those around you that have supported your work. Our longstanding relationship with the Faculty of Education is instrumental in our being able to access many of the different spaces on the YorkU campus. Furthermore, our partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School, which allows us to set up shop right in the heart of their building means we always have a cutting edge facility to put on our programming for the over 100 youth we had registered this summer. The TDSB, and Continuing Education department more specifically, always provide the best and most responsive

teachers who have a deep understanding of the social context, backgrounds and lives of our students. We could never do it without them! Another group of special young people who are the backbone of our summer program are the mentors. These senior Westview students move into the mentoring role with such grace and ease. They are the epitome of the summer program and SBL's Growth Model which makes our organization so unique.

The final part to Becoming Your Own Hero is to share your successes with the community in the hopes it encourages others to become their own hero. Turn the page and explore the reasons why our summer was a success. Learn more about how great people changed lives, how intergenerational relationships were formed, and how community was once again strengthened.



Executive Director, Programs  
**MOHAMED AHMED**



# Board of DIRECTORS



**T**his report on Success Beyond Limit's summer of 2017 presents a success story that captures the essence of SBL's unique approach to serving youth. It tells a story of fun filled days packed with learning opportunities of all kinds, both academic and social.

It's a great pleasure and privilege for members of SBL's Board of Directors to be part of such a dynamic program serving the needs and interests of so many youth. The growth model that has so firmly taken root in the organization -- mentees becoming volunteers who in turn take on the role of mentor, with some assuming leadership roles -- is truly inspirational. We've recently come full circle with a former mentor, first becoming staff and currently serving on the Board.

The success that SBL enjoys is made possible through the generous support of our funders and partners, many of whom visited our summer home at Osgoode Hall Law School on the York University campus. We are eager to share the SBL experience and extend a

warm welcome to one and all to visit the SBL Youth Space housed during the academic year in Westview Centennial Secondary School.

In closing, the Board extends heartfelt congratulations and thanks to the SBL summer team: the dedicated, caring, highly skilled TDSB teachers and the Academic Site Lead, Mrs. Subban, the mentors, the volunteers and the mentees. We wish to express our gratitude to the SBL staff members who are the very heart of what makes SBL the success story that it is: Executive Director: Programs, Mohamed Ahmed; Executive Director: Operations, Tesfai Mengesha; After-School Program Supervisor, Shanaz Ali.

Chair, Board of Directors  
**PAT SAUL**

**SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS**





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SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS



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# Our TEAM



**CORE STAFF: (LEFT TO RIGHT)**  
Tesfai Mengesha, Shanaz Ali, Mohamed Ahmed.

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#SBLFAM



**TEACHERS: (TOP TO BOTTOM)**  
Nastassia Subban, Melissa Gallo, Melissa Rabess, Joseph Smith, Andrea Thompson, Sabrina Razack.



*Our*

# TEAM

## **MENTORS: (LEFT TO RIGHT)**

TOP ROW: Brittney Brizan, Chanele Williams, Sabrina Abukar, David Ofori, Darren Aning, Daisphia Francis, Shaughnessy Barracks, Yahye Mohamud, Anisa Hussein, Donnel Jeffrey, Sarah Sam, Margaret Sam, and Krystal Duah.

MIDDLE ROW: Jhanoi Walker, Jumoke Jimoh, Shivane Singh, Presila Mason, Anjali Dhanraj and Shackera Williams.

BOTTOM ROW: Kherto Ahmed, Demar Holness, Hassan Ali, Hanad Elmi, Mohamed Aden and Denis Uhumangho.



#COMMUNITY



## **RECREATIONAL STAFF: (LEFT TO RIGHT)**

Ademola Adewusi, Vanessa Dias, Shanaz Ali, and Devindra Ramoutar.



# Evaluation.

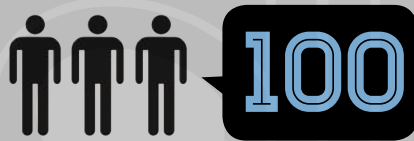
# of Students registered on July 4th, 2017.



# of Students registered at the peak of the program.



# of Students registered at the end of the program.



# of Students that received the credit.



**Average Daily Attendance 92%**

## #RESULTS



# of Westview bound mentees that started the program.



# of Westview bound mentees that finished the program.



# of Westview bound mentees that received the credit.



# of transfer students needing support that started the program.



# of transfer students needing support that finished the program.



# of transfer students needing support that received the credit.



**Average Mentor Attendance 99%**

28

# of volunteers for the entire summer including 2 volunteer coordinators.

1280

# of total volunteer hours for the entire summer including 2 volunteer coordinators.

7

# of co-op credits achieved by mentors.

# Evaluation.



## PURSuing POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**96%** of students felt that they are confident in graduating from high school following our summer program.

**94%** of students stated that they would want to attend University/College after high school.

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE:

**97%** of students said that their overall classroom experience was positive.

**81%** of students were interested in what they were learning in the classroom during the SBL program.

## SUPPORT & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

**94%** of students stated that they built a good relationship with SBL staff that includes mentors, teachers, and core staff.

**100%** of parents surveyed stated they would recommend the program for other children or students

## CAPACITY BUILDING & EMPLOYMENT:

**92%** of volunteers felt that they developed skills that can help them with future employment.

**84%** of volunteers stated that they will continue to volunteer in their community.

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

**78%** of mentors feel confident about being able to provide social support for youth in their community.

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

**96%** of students felt they learned about different careers during the SBL summer program through our career day and guest speakers.







## What They Say!

# TEACHERS

“Thanks to SBL’s guidance and support, I have heard a mentor say that they accomplished things they didn’t think they would be able to do.”

—ANDREA THOMPSON



“SBL is responding to TDSB data which clearly demonstrates that students who earn 16 credits by grade 10 have a significantly higher likelihood of graduating in 4 years. SBL is truly a valuable asset to the community.”

—MELISSA RABESS

“The staff were warm, friendly and all shared a mission of providing an experience for students that they knew increased their chances of not only graduating high school but also exponentially exposing them to other facets of life through innovative programming.”

—SABRINA RAZACK





## What They Say!

### PARENTS

“

*Since Nicholas has started the SBL program, he has been more confident in himself, more independent, he also got the chance to build his self-esteem. Nicholas also made new friends, he loved his teachers, and the mentors were very kind and helpful. Nicholas enjoyed all of the trips and he has never been to some of the places before! Nicholas mostly benefited from the program by earning a credit and getting a chance to know and have a feel for what grade 9 is all about. He loved the program a lot!”*

—MARIA ALLARD (PARENT OF NICOLAS KHAN)



"The SBL program was a very good experience for Radwa. It was an organized program that taught Radwa educational skills and how to be ready for academic achievements in high school. At the SBL summer program, it has people there to push the children beyond limits. I am very happy with the experience my child has had. The SBL program prepares children for steps in life."

—SIRAAD ALI (PARENT OF RADWA HASSAN)



# What They Say!

## MENTORS

“

My experience as a mentor was amazing. I learned to project my voice and build on skills that I already have, such as leading a group. Most of these skills I've developed through the years was with the help of SBL, who has been there throughout my years in high school and watched me grow." —DARREN ANING



*"My experience as a mentor in the SBL program has been phenomenal. It has not only taught me important life lessons but it has allowed me to grow as a person. I was able to go through all the phases of the program. I was a mentee, a volunteer, and eventually a mentor. Over the years, SBL has exposed me to endless amounts of opportunities. From being able to sit on a jury at a mock trial to teaching grade 8 students how to construct an argument. SBL has taught me to be a leader and for that, I am eternally grateful."*

—PRESILA MASON

**"My growth throughout the program was incredible! I was able to help mentees learn how to deal with a problem in a positive manner, provide academic support and I was able to realize how strong my leadership skills are. I love SBL."** —SHAUGHNESSY BARRACKS

"My experience as a mentor this summer has been life-changing. It allowed me to come out of my shell and be more confident in my surroundings. This summer, I honestly believe that building relationships is one of the keys to the success of the program. I've built many relationships throughout my journey with the Success Beyond Limits program, but during the summer I was given the opportunity to build many more relationships because one of the roles as a mentor is to give guidance to the mentees." —DAISPHIA FRANCIS



# Osgoode Hall

# LAW SCHOOL

**A**ll 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 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 dials of differentiated instruction, and set a tone of excellence. Beyond the attributes of the physical space, there has been the impact of the Osgoode staff, students and faculty members embracing our students and staff as a part of the Osgoode community.



# Our Program

## MORNINGS IN THE CLASSROOM

The academic component of our program is foundational to the work we do. The design of the morning classrooms is intentional with the aim of setting up every student for success towards earning their first high school credit. The class sizes are smaller than a conventional classroom. Each class has 5-6 mentors that act as additional supports alongside the teacher. With the mentees transitioning to high school, many of which are anxious and nervous the mentors share their experiences, provide insight and advice helping to ease the transition.

The collaborative nature of the teaching team ensures the curriculum is reflective of current global and local events, responsive to student needs, and meaningfully engaging. The SBL staff bring to life the curriculum by providing exposure opportunities (e.g. access to The Indigenous Games, TIFF & The Rogers Cup) and the necessary wrap around supports all of which takes place at the state of the art facility of Osgoode Hall Law School.



## TRANSPORTATION (ON TIME AND READY TO LEARN)

SBL's commitment to creating an engaging summer experience – that is accessible and open to all – means it is important to include free transportation. Transportation is provided to all our program participants – this includes, mentees, mentors and volunteers. Youth are picked up within the Jane and Finch community and bussed into York University daily and at the end of the day dropped off. Providing transportation to Osgoode Law School and to our weekly field trips speaks to SBL's commitment to breaking down barriers to access.

# Our Program



## AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

Afternoons play a complimentary role to our mornings by incorporating physical activity and arts based programming. Programming is led by our mentors, mentor alumni and young people from the Jane and Finch community, which takes place across the York University campus. It's an opportunity for mentees to develop and cultivate their talents and hobbies or the space to develop a new one.

After a morning of intensive school work, the afternoon allows students to let loose and relax while trying new and diverse activities.

## WEEKLY FIELD TRIPS

The end to each week was celebrated with a field trip. This is a valuable component of the program because it is important for us to expose youth to various parts of their city. The trips provide a chance to bond as a whole group while having fun and exploring various sites across the City of Toronto.

We spent time in Richmond Hill for bowling and the Wave Pool, Etobicoke where we went Go-Karting, North York to Roller-Skate and downtown for an afternoon at the Toronto International Film Festival.



# Our Program

## MENTOR TRAINING

Before the start of our summer program, we worked closely with the 25 mentors that will be engaging with our mentees throughout the 6-weeks at Osgoode. These mentors are all senior Westview students and most will be returning to Westview. Their main role is to build positive relationships while leading activities and working with teachers in the classroom as an additional layer of support.

Through the generous support of our partners, we had the opportunity to run half a dozen training sessions from April to June that centered on: classroom engagement, being an effective mentor, conflict mediation, summer roles and responsibilities, program planning, and Health & Safety knowledge. It was also vital to incorporate social outings, so our youth could engage with each other in ways beyond what a workshop can provide.

Each generation of mentors that have come through our program have for the most part been program participants in the past. The success of our summer each year is a result of the continued participation of youth going through our growth model and the engagement and leadership our youth mentors bring.



## TRACK & FIELD DAY



As we enter the track centre, who do we see walk right past the long line of 145 youth? A familiar face to the program, P.K Subban from the NHL's Nashville Predators who was preparing for the upcoming season. The Track and Field Centre at York University attracts top athletes, while also hosting our annual Track and Field event. The event allows our youth to showcase their talent or to learn and develop a new one. Healthy competition inside and outside of the classroom is encouraged each summer.

Youth who have never participated in track events, such as the hurdles or the long jump felt comfortable in doing so. This comfort level is thanks to our mentors who created an environment conducive to learning and risk taking. Our aim was simple: to have fun while improving our physical well-being.



# Our Program



## PLAY DAY

We can't have a summer program without an organized water showdown! During the hot summer days, we asked the mentors to create various activities for one afternoon that incorporate fun with water. The Play Day event quickly became a highlight for many of our youth.

This year we found a product that could create 20 already sealed water balloons in 30 seconds! You can only imagine what kind of fun can happen with that much water on a hot summer afternoon.

## LAWS

Law has always been of interest for many of our young people. With the summer program at Osgoode Hall Law School, it is only right to have our long-time partner LAWS facilitate Mock Trials. LAWS provides an introduction to the criminal justice system through real case studies addressing controversial issues. Our young people get the opportunity to experience the following roles: a lawyer, witness, bailiff, judge and jury.

For many, this experience leads to a continued interest in law through their high school journey and beyond!





# Our Program

## MOVIE DAYS

Having a good summer includes watching a good movie or two in the comfort of your own home. The YorkU campus has become our home, more specifically the Nat Taylor Cinema. During the afternoon on each and every Thursday, we have the opportunity to provide a theatre experience to any movie we put on screen. Some movies that we show have become an annual tradition because of its popularity with every generation while others are the latest summer blockbusters... on DVD.

Even though food or drinks are not allowed in the theatre, we are filled with excitement and the occasional commentary some youth provide that is quickly followed with a loud "Shhhh."



## LET'S DEBRIEF

Our summer is successful because we are youth-led. A large part of that means providing decision-making power to our mentors each year. In doing so we always want to hear from our experts on what they feel went well and where we can grow. As a result, we ran a debrief session over the course of a day. A strong debrief session starts with securing the right space for a conducive learning environment. Mozilla has a space downtown that brings excitement to any type of group work because of their design and access to technology.

After six-weeks of programming, there is a lot to cover in just one day. Our mentors were amazing at providing their insights and feedback. After the debrief session, karaoke was on our minds. We headed over and quickly got into the groove of it. Some of us sang our hearts out while others couldn't help but capture quality material for their Snapchat and Twitter accounts. The day ended with dinner and of course a lot of water for those who sang and those who laughed.

# Our Program



## TIFF

Exploring spaces across our city during the summer is exciting for the adults in SBL and not just the youth. One of the highlights of the summer was watching a private screening at the TIFF Lightbox. This film was an oldie for us but a goodie at the same. The film titled *Gone Too Far* created so much buzz with our youth that it poured into the classroom conversations the next day. Class discussions centred on how cultures are shaped, their fluid nature and how they can be appropriated.

What makes a place like TIFF special is how a young filmmaker with an idea can share his/her story on the big screen. In the near future, we look forward to screening films created by our young people.

## CAREER DAY

Midway through the summer we opened up our classrooms and put on a Career Day. Largely organized by Nastassia Subban, our site lead, this summer brought together an eclectic group of young professionals. The day kicked off with a captivating keynote speaker Amanda Parris, the host of CBC's *Exhibitionist* and *Marvin's Room*. She shared the many memorable and critical moments of her journey that led to her becoming the host of a national TV and radio show.

Following the keynote, our young people got to meet and talk to a myriad of career professionals, many of whom reiterated that there are many paths to success and that passions can become careers. Along their journeys they shared the importance of turning a setback into a stepping stone.



# Our Program

## NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

During the summer, the City of Toronto hosts a myriad of street fairs, cultural celebrations and food festivals. This year, the city was home to The North American Indigenous Games with many of the sporting events held at York University. As we explored Indigenous stories and histories in the classroom, we also attended Women's and Men's under 19 Indigenous basketball matches.

For many of our young people it was exciting to witness competitive basketball with athletes not too distant in age. The highlight for many of our mentors was meeting and taking pictures with the athletes following their matches.



## HIP HOP LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

This summer marks the 5th year since we initially piloted the Hip Hop Curriculum, which has since been published into a curriculum guide for Ontario K-12 teachers called Rhymes to Re-education. With this summer's theme "Becoming Your Own Hero", we focused on lessons that explored the construction of social identities. Hip Hop was at the core of lessons examining cultural fashions, various Toronto dialectics, and understandings of community.

It was the conduit through which critical conversations were had, new understandings developed and the imagining of new possibilities.



# Our Program



## THE ROGERS CUP

Once a year Tennis' biggest stars make a stop in the City of Toronto for The Rogers Cup. Fortunately, The Rogers Cup is hosted at the Rexall Centre, steps away from our summer home Osgoode Hall Law School. It has become an annual practice to have teachers, volunteers, mentors and students attend. It's an amazing opportunity to witness live tennis matches and take part in the interactive fun and games surrounding the courts.

With VIP access we got up close to the action. We want to extend a big thank to our partner Kids Up Front for making this happen.



# Our Program

## PARENT NIGHT

Many students transitioning to high school have numerous questions, as do their parents. Our parent night is not structured to give one on one feedback about students, but rather it's an evening that utilizes a world café format to engage parents in conversations around I.E.P.s, Community Perspectives, High School Course Selections, the SBL Youth Space, and Parental Engagement.

This year we had 60 parents in attendance, along with many youth. SBL mentors, staff and teachers shared their valuable insights and answered questions as a starting point to an ongoing conversation.



## NUTRITION & SUCCESS

Providing students with a nutritious breakfast and lunch has always been and will continue to be an integral part of the SBL summer program. A nutritious start provides the students with the necessary nutrition to reach their full potential throughout the day.

Ensuring each student receives a proper breakfast and lunch leaves more time to focus on student achievement and eliminates a potential barrier to youth success.

Halal and vegetarian options are provided each day to accommodate various religious and dietary needs of students. The breakfast and lunch hours give youth the time to bond with their mentors and peers and build the relationships that will last long after the six weeks of the summer program have ended.



# Our Program

## GRADUATION

The culmination of the successes of our young people over the summer is celebrated in an energetic and exciting event we call graduation. Our graduation kicked off with a Samba drumming performance by mentors and mentees. A packed room of friends, family, and community stakeholders witness 100 mentees receive their first high school credit. The night was filled with celebration and recognition awards for the outstanding achievements of our mentors and mentees. For many in attendance the highlight of the evening was the Recap Video, which summarizes the 6-weeks in a few minutes.

As everyone exited the Moot Court room, they entered the foyer where the graduating class were treated to amazing Sweeties' cupcakes.



## FACULTY OF EDUCATION: SUMMER INSTITUTE

This year's Summer Institute was aptly titled Relationships to Canada 150: Paradoxes, Contradictions and Questions. Each year we support the Summer Institute by providing SBL volunteers the opportunity to further volunteer during the 2-day conference, not only to earn more hours needed for graduation, but also to be exposed to the wealth of knowledge exchange that happens.

At the end of the experience, the volunteers are presented with a letter of reference which is added to their portfolio.



# Partnerships



## YORK UNIVERSITY

Operating our summer program at YorkU instead of a high school is strategic in so many ways. Access to postsecondary starts with feeling like you belong in those spaces and our time on campus cultivates a sense of ownership and an increased level of comfort towards such an environment. The Faculty of Education has been a core partner in establishing such an opportunity. Beginning with the high tech classrooms at York to the game floor of the Tait McKenzie gym or Rogers Cup finals, youth quickly got comfortable in a university that is steps away from their homes.

Our partnership with YorkU is more than just access to these spaces; it is a continued opportunity to further develop a positive community + university relationship.

## TDSB

Through our partnership we have successfully delivered 100 credits this summer to youth in the Jane-Finch community. Our fun and energy filled site lead with her 5 amazing teachers have left a great impression on us. Though they were new to the program they quickly embraced their role, which isn't to just provide a credit but to dive deeper and make learning meaningful. This is not any regular teaching experience, but one where teachers are always open and willing to try new things, adjust teaching plans to be student-specific and always fresh and engaging!

We welcome first year or even seasoned teachers because we learn from them as much as they learn from us. We appreciate this partnership with TDSB, and the department of Continuing Education.





# Partnerships



## YOUTHREX

For the past 4 years, YouthRex has been a vital partner in helping us share the stories of our young people. Through evaluation we have been able to directly capture the experiences of our mentors, volunteers and mentees through their own words. Going into the summer, SBL Staff and YouthRex worked collaboratively at reviewing existing evaluation to ensure all aspects of our programming were captured in a comprehensive manner. Working with YouthRex has allowed us to strengthen our evaluation process and develop a deeper understanding of our reach.

We look forward to our continued partnership as we shift our evaluation focus to the school year where we'll continue to examine the impact of operating our Youth Space at Westview Centennial Secondary School.







# Profile: Adna Ahmed

## STUDENT

“

A day doesn't go by without feeling Adna Ahmed's presence and her letting us know she's enjoying every second of the summer program. Her favourite part? Play Day. Adna says that "On play day I had so much fun! It was a day where I got a chance to meet new people, even though we were almost done the program. But on that day, there were water games, lots of laughter and fun". When asked to compare her middle school experience to the SBL classroom experience, Adna said that "My middle school experience was challenging, and I always had to go to the teachers for help. My SBL classroom experience was different because my mentors could see when I was struggling and they came to help me. The teachers in SBL were really helpful and funny. My teacher always found a way to make sure we weren't stressing about the work by taking time off and dancing. This really helped me because it cleared my mind and got me focused on my work." Adna's SBL classroom experience is what truly makes the SBL Summer Program so special and unique due to the built-in extra support that happens daily with our mentors and teachers.



Adna went on to say, "With the mentors in the classroom I feel comfortable asking for help and I feel like there is more help in the classroom. It was like I had 6 teachers in the class when the mentors were there. Without the mentors, I feel like I wouldn't have had the courage to ask my teacher for help because my teacher has other students to help. The mentors had my back when I needed to use the washroom while I was writing an essay, or when I needed to take a little drink. Mentors being there for me made me more comfortable to approach them. Without the mentors in my classroom, I wouldn't get the extra push to do my work and get my credit". As Adna has shared the mentors are the backbone of the SBL program and their leadership and support ensures the success of the mentees.

When asked what impact the program had, Adna responded, "I got to meet new people from another school that are coming to Westview this year. Academically, I also feel comfortable because SBL classes prepared me for what high school is like. Also, I have the SBL staff that will have my back if I need any help or advice". As the school year begins, SBL will continue to support Adna as she transitions to Westview and we look forward to building and growing with her as she continues her high school journey!





# Profile: *Kaynan Hussein* **VOLUNTEER** & *Sherisa Baker*

“

Last year summer, Kaynan Hussein and Sherisa Baker were mentees in the program and received their first high school credit. When they heard about the Volunteer Coordinator role they were very eager and excited. The role requires them to lead and train incoming volunteers weekly over a three-week span earning them 120 volunteer hours.

Kaynan was the volunteer coordinator for the first three weeks of the SBL Summer program and stated, “The SBL Summer program was a very cool experience for me and will allow me to blossom as a future mentor one day. It taught me a valuable lesson as what it takes to be a proper mentor”. Sherisa was the volunteer coordinator for the last three weeks of the SBL Summer program and has said that “Being the volunteer coordinator was a good experience and it made me more confident in myself. I built relationships with most of the mentees and had an amazing



(ABOVE: SHERISA BAKER)

time while doing it. The confidence I built could really help me become a mentor next year. I will continue to volunteer at SBL until it is time to apply for the job in 2018!”

Kaynan and Sherisa truly capture the SBL growth model – starting out as a mentee in 2016, transitioning to Volunteer Coordinators, and both have expressed an interest in applying for the mentor role in the future!

(RIGHT: KAYNAN HUSSEIN)





# Profile: Sariena Luy

## MENTOR

“

This summer was Sariena's third and final summer in her role as our film mentor. Sariena's plans on staying connected to SBL were clearly heard by many at graduation when she said, "They can't get rid of me." When we think of SBL, we think of all the youth like Sariena who we have seen develop over the years and have learned so much from.

Many youth have grown within various roles at SBL because our graduation model exists to support youth along their individual paths to success. Sariena has been a part of our family since her introduction to SBL 4 years ago as a mentee. During this time, she developed an interest in film and photography and became our only mentor to document our summer experience each year.

From taking advantage of other opportunities, such as becoming a member of The Tiff Next Wave Committee, to now creating her own initiative, it's clear Sariena's calendar is full year round. Flaunt It, a movement she created, allows young women



to feel empowered and celebrate all their so-called "imperfections" through photography. Recently, Sariena was successful in securing her first grant that will allow her to grow this initiative and do more for so many young women. Did we also mention she created her own short film? It's titled "10 Things That Will Lead to Happiness." All these accomplishments happening throughout her high school journey, which ended with her receiving the distinguished Adobe Creative Scholarship, which is 1 of 12 globally. So what's next? Sariena will be at Ryerson this coming fall majoring in Arts and Humanities. We can't wait to see all that she accomplishes throughout her next 4 years.

You can find her work on our YouTube Channel or on her Instagram page @flauntitmovement and <https://sariena.myportfolio.com>





# Profile: Joseph Smith

## TEACHER



“

**Where did you grow up? And how does it inform your pedagogy? Can you give an example?**

I was born and raised in the Jane and Finch area. My classroom pedagogy is directly influenced by my experiences growing up in the area. As an adult, I have come to realize that much of my academic success – apart from my willingness to learn – is the result of a teacher’s ability to wed academic material to the psycho-social and inter/intrapersonal tensions and obstacles I was experiencing during my adolescents. It isn’t enough for an educator to simply talk about the quadratic equation, or examine the intricacies of a Shakespearean play, or discuss the construction of the periodic table; in order to stay engaged, and truly care about the subject matter at hand I (we) had to be seduced into caring about the material, by being acquainted with the social conditions, pressures, obstacles and triumphs within which a particular intellectual advancement was made. Connection is key, and once it was made clear that the author, inventor, scientist, mathematician, philosopher: dealt with similar struggles as I did; endured tragedy like I did; dedicated themselves to something meaningful like I hoped to; struggled with peer-pressure (as an adult) and overcame it through their perseverance like I desperately wanted to; I was then able to retain information much more rigorously, and seek out new information on my own.

**What have you learned as an educator being a part of the program?**

As an educator, I have been able to enhance my ability to develop and deliver lessons in an emotionally impactful and intellectually stimulating way, due to the structure and timing of the program. To be able to deliver meaningful instruction within the family studies and literacy curriculum, during the summer months, to an audience of 25 or more students who are unaccustomed to high school conventions requires us as educators to be poignant, relevant, and concise.

We have to inspire students to engage with as much information as they can as swiftly as they can. To do this we have to employ as many tactics as possible (and develop new ones) so that the integrity of the SBL opportunity is not jeopardized.

**Can you share what the impact of the mentors is on you as a teacher?**

Without the mentors the education portion of SBL dramatically suffers. The mentors are the conduits of the SBL program. They help make appealing, what otherwise could be considered a very dull summer morning – reading, writing, thinking, with a paper and pencil under the supervision of an adult. It is through them that the ideals and principles of the program are made, manifest and reinforced.

**What’s next in September? And how does this program prepare you?**

In September I continue to teach at York University, where I am currently completing a PhD in the Humanities. As a T.A. at York I teach in a first year philosophy course. I will also continue to work for Environics research institute as a project coordinator for the Black Experience Project, and take an LTO high school teaching assignment whenever I can fit one in during the year. I absolutely loved my teaching experience at SBL, and found that it only deepened my appreciation for my community, and convicted me even further with regards to the necessary work that must be done to prepare our Generation Y cohorts to take their necessary place in the economy of the 21st century. I want to see the youth from my neighbourhood strive, contribute, and excel in the burgeoning industries coming into existence as we speak, and leave their vital imprints on the world. This program has prepared me to be able to execute my teaching practice, in an ever more effective and relevant way.



# Profile: Shivaneer Singh

## MENTOR AMONG MENTOR

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Shivaneer's relationship with Success Beyond Limits began as a volunteer during the summer of 2014. Shivaneer heard the school announcements that volunteering in the SBL summer program was a fun way to earn the forty hours needed to graduate from high school. As a volunteer, Shivaneer built such strong relationships with the mentees that she continued her relationship with them through the 2014-2015 SBL After-School program. Impressed with Shivaneer's hardworking and caring demeanor, she was hired as a mentor for the 2015 summer programs. Since 2015, Shivaneer has continued in her role as a mentor and is adored by current and past mentees, some of whom are fellow mentors.

As a mentor, Shivaneer has been able to build deep-rooted relationships with so many of the mentees. Most impressive is her unique ability to command a room without raising her voice! When talking about growth, Shivaneer shares, "As a mentor I feel proud of myself. I feel confident in standing up for things and encouraging others to do so. I am confident in speaking publicly, I'm not a closed person. I am able to help others academically and through any conflicts they have." At this year's graduation we witnessed Shivaneer receive the Mentor Excellence Award, Mentor Classroom Support Award and the prestigious Mentor Among Mentors Award. The Mentor Among Mentors Award is a very special award because the recipient is selected by the



mentors, whom they feel demonstrated leadership, a strong work ethic and built strong connections with the mentees! When asked about receiving the award, Shivaneer said, "SBL makes up the best mentor team, they bring all of our personalities together and let's all of us grow together. I truly felt blessed just knowing that one person chose me, but knowing that I was the chosen winner of the Mentor Among Mentors award was amazing".

Shivaneer's growth throughout the program has been outstanding and we wish her all the best as she continues her education in September at York University to study Biomedical Science! When asked why she chose to study Biomedical Science, she states "I hope to be in the health care profession and travel the world to help others with their medical needs. I want to give back to my community and SBL because they are my community and have made me a positive role model." We love Shivaneer's caring and thoughtful nature and we will definitely miss her daily presence in the SBL program!



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# Profile: Donnel Jeffrey

## MENTOR

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Donnel's story starts 4 years ago as a program participant who was eager to get involved in our 2013 summer program. After going through our growth model by volunteering and becoming a mentor two summers in a row, Donnel's development has been a catalyst for continued success. To date he has received 13 awards over a span of 4 years! And has kept each and every award which is extraordinary. This speaks volumes to the impact a community can have when the adult allies rally around our youth to celebrate their achievements.

Being reliable and keeping a positive attitude has been two of his three unique attributes. This summer Donnel received the first weekly award for doing just that and by setting the tone early. Taking on the mentor role for the second year this summer gave him the comfort to lead by example through his strong leadership skills, which was also recognized at our graduation ceremony.



His third unique attribute is his laugh and ability to make others smile on a daily basis. Donnel has one of the most contagious laughs in the program. This could be his secret to success but we'll just have to wait and find out someday. Donnel's most memorable moment from the summer program is the youth who successfully received their first high school credit at our graduation!

As for next steps, Donnel will be pursuing post-secondary studies this coming winter studying Early Childhood Education. We are reminded how important long-term relationships are when youth like Donnel say "Over the past four years, the staff here are always there for you, and always willing to help you when in need of something." We will continue to build and learn from Donnel as he pursues his goals.

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# Profile: Shanaz Ali

## STAFF

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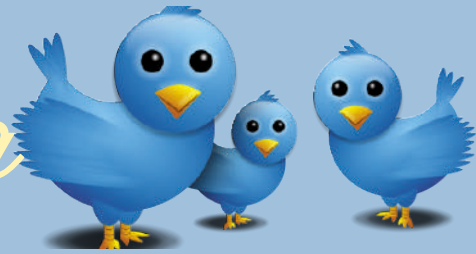
Shanaz’s journey with the Success Beyond Limits program began in 2014 through a conversation with her Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) instructor.

OISE requires teacher candidates to do a placement that is self-directed and based on an individual’s personal interests. Shanaz expressed a desire to do her placement in the Jane and Finch community because she grew up there and was familiar with the challenges many young people in the area were facing. Ultimately, she landed a placement with SBL that was supposed to be only for a month, but because she was captivated with the work and impact of the program and built meaningful relationship with young people she chose to stay on until the end of the school year. That decision was pivotal in her securing a role as an SBL staff member the summer of 2014, where she was the Volunteer Coordinator. That summer she left a lasting impression with her strong work ethic, caring and friendly demeanor.

As SBL transitioned into the school year, so did her role as the new After-School Coordinator. For many she’s become a familiar sight and voice whether it’s in the halls of Westview, the other hand of the phone line with parents, or in the SBL space conducting mentor meetings. Shanaz is an invaluable part of the SBL family, so much so many youth consider her their second mom!



# Media







# Funders & PARTNERS



#THANK YOU

