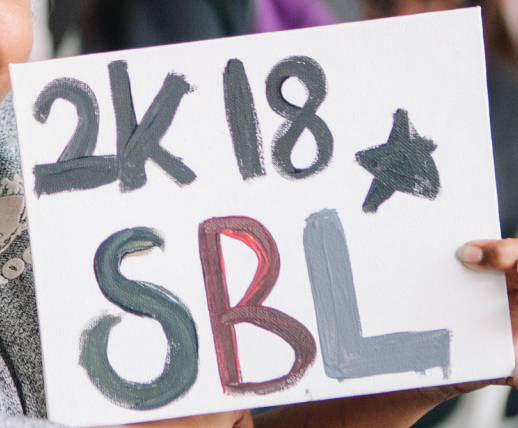


SUMMER

Report 2018



Acknowledgments. *Know Your Foundation*

◆ ◆ ◆ **A**s Success Beyond Limits (SBL) embarked on its 9th Summer Program, the importance of understanding the journey, and celebrating the here and now, became our reoccurring points of reflection. To really understand our path of growth, acknowledging the past became significant, and to expose the value of this process to our youth, we highlighted the necessity to “Know Your Foundation” which became the theme of SBL’s 2018 Summer Program!

As the youth eagerly left their buses, entered the hallways of their soon to be summer home, and sat in their first day morning assembly, the Know Your Foundation theme immediately became clear! They listened to the welcome from SBL staff, teachers, recreational staff, mentors and volunteers who explained their roles and connection to the program, which soon illustrated the long history and foundation many had with SBL.

Our site lead, Ms. Subban who was experiencing her 7th year of introducing herself to a new cohort of SBL students (mentees) continued the theme as she acknowledged our presence on the traditional territory of Indigenous land. This recognition was consistently demonstrated as weekly questions were posed to inspire understanding and reflection on Canada’s roots and history with Indigenous peoples. Continuing to inspire notions of one’s grounding and foundation, the students, mentors and teachers engaged in dialogue and watched films that assisted in their own reflection of self as they watched the Book of Negroes episodes every week, which illustrated and highlighted the long history of African Canadians.



Identifying your foundation leads to understanding your journey. As the Oakdale and Brookview students became SBL mentees, last year’s mentees evolved to volunteers, volunteers transitioned to mentors and mentors developed into recreational staff, the growth and pathways of our youth really took shape. The SBL Summer Program itself has also experienced an evolution and progression of locations, which has involved the support of York University, specifically the Faculty of Education. Their institutional leadership has assisted in a community and post-secondary partnership in which SBL with the collaboration of the Toronto District School Board, Continuing Education and Focus On Youth, has had the space to deliver 101 credits to students this year!

◆ ◆ ◆ As you peruse the following pages, enjoy experiencing the many facets that makes SBL what it is, from its growth model, school-community partnerships, peer and intergenerational relationships, and academic greatness. Allow the essence of SBL to spear-head your own reflection of your passion, journey, and of course, all that is possible from acknowledging your strength, rooted in Knowing Your Foundation.



Kaneka Watkins-Jackson
Executive Director

Board of DIRECTORS



Success Beyond Limits' annual summer report captures the essence of what SBL's youth-driven growth model is all about and highlights the many aspects of what makes SBL a successful model for supporting young people in their community. This past summer was another year of exceptional learning, fun, friendship and new opportunities. The stories and the photos, although beautifully captured offer only a glimpse into all that makes SBL what is.

For those of us on SBL's Board of Directors, we have the distinct honour of being able to work with SBL's gifted and dedicated staff team from teachers, mentors, volunteers to SBL program staff and management. For some of us who have been with SBL over several (or perhaps even more) summers, we stand witness to the success of the youth growth model as we see many former SBL participants become volunteers or mentors, return to work with us when they are pursuing and/or completed postsecondary education. The ability for the program to see young people come full circle is by intentional and thoughtful design, and continues to bring new ideas and energy into our work.

The organization and our programs are supported generously by many partners and funders, and without them – our work would not be possible. York University continues to provide a summer home for SBL on their Keele campus. This year, even amidst campus construction and the logistical challenges

associated with a labour disruption, York (with support from the Faculty of Education and Osgoode Hall Law School) demonstrated their willingness to continue to support educational opportunities for youth from Toronto's Jane Finch community. Similarly, we continue to receive support from the TDSB both directly to the Summer Program and as we prepare to return to the SBL Youth Space in Westview Centennial Secondary School. Along with some of our longstanding partners, we are also pleased to welcome new partners such as the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Finally, the Board would like to thank the SBL summer team for another fantastic summer. In particular, we want to thank our TDSB teachers and our TDSB Academic Site Lead, Ms. Subban; our dynamic mentors and volunteers; SBL parents and mentees who believe in our model and came on the journey. We would also like to thank our SBL core staff – Mohamed Ahmed, Shanaz Ali, Shyanne Witter, Tesfai Mengesha and Kaneka Watkins-Jackson – you are the heart and hands of SBL and we, along with the community and youth that you inspire, are most grateful. grateful.

YVETTE MUNRO

On behalf of SBL Board of Directors



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SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS



Our TEAM



CORE STAFF: (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Mohamed Ahmed, Shyanne Witter, Shanaz Ali, Kaneka Watkins-Jackson, Tesfai Mengesha

#SBLFAM



TEACHERS: (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Nigel Hunter, Nastassia Subban (Site Lead), Mauricio Araya, Sabrina Razack, Charu Khurana, Joseph Smith.



Our

TEAM

MENTORS: (LEFT TO RIGHT)

TOP ROW: Salmann Mohamed, Darren Aning, Rodney Osei-Nuako, Jamal Fuller, Asad Ahmed, Haji Shee, Jasmine Guerra, Krystal Duah, Ethan Kim, Leah Matthews, Deshawntae Dale, Asmaa Mohamud.

BOTTOM ROW: Jhanoi Walker, Sherisa Baker, Shaugnessy Barracks, Anisa Hussein, Sarah Sam, Treveno Sutherland, Daisphia Francis, Anjali Dhanraj, Margaret Sam.



#COMMUNITY



RECREATIONAL STAFF: (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Matthew Alay, Shyanne Witter, Vanessa Dias, Devindra Ramoutar.

02



Evaluation.

of Students registered on July 3rd, 2018.



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

93%

#RESULTS

70%

of youth from our summer program will be attending Westview.

100%

of transfer students completed the program and 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.

4

of co-op credits achieved by mentors.

Evaluation.

PURSUING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

FOLLOWING SBL'S SUMMER PROGRAM...

83% of students felt confident that they would do well in high school.

92% of students believed they would graduate from high school.

88% of students stated that they would want to attend University/College after high school.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE:

82% of students reported their overall SBL classroom experience was positive.

92% of students were interested in what they were learning in the SBL classroom.

SUPPORT & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

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

95% of parents said they would recommend the program for other children or students.

CAPACITY BUILDING & EMPLOYMENT:

89% of volunteers believed the program was very useful for future employment.

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

84% of volunteers plan on applying to be a summer program mentor the following year.

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

100% of mentors believe they built valuable skills during the program to help them obtain future employment.

89% of students feel they learned about different careers during the program.



What They Say!

TEACHERS

“

In my second year teaching at SBL I continue to be inspired by the dedication and commitment of the youth mentors to the students. The staff along with the volunteers truly make an unforgettable, lasting impression on the kids. The collaborative atmosphere fosters engaging and unique approaches to life skills and education..”

—MS. RAZACK



“Working at SBL this summer was a great experience to see the student's growth and see them close the gap in their learning!”

—MR. ARAYA

“By consistently putting teachers and students first, SBL manages to go beyond the limits of our traditional education system, precisely because it holistically meets the full range of an individual's needs.”

—MR. SMITH

What They Say!

PARENTS

“

The SBL Summer Program is by far the most amazing program there is and the only program where you feel like everyone treats your child like family. The mentors, teachers, and staff all made this program worthwhile. I believe that my son is ready for whatever is thrown at him in grade 9 academically and socially because of all the support and mentoring from SBL. I'm so happy that the SBL staff are going to be there throughout his high school journey to continue to give him support. I can't thank them enough for all their incredible hard work that they have done. I would recommend the SBL program to everyone.”

—ALICIA GRANT (PARENT OF TYSHAWN GRANT)



"The SBL Summer Program has definitely given my daughter Almekha Cummings more awareness towards high school and life in general. Almekha has become more responsible, empowered, and confident in herself. This program prepares these young people for the future by showing them different ways and ideas, and the opportunity to experience different things concerning life. Everyone that is part of this program that works with the students are very professional and I want to say thank you to every single person that put this GREAT program together for the students."

—SUZETTE GEDDES (PARENT OF ALMEKA CUMMINGS)

What They Say!

YOUTH

“ Being a mentor felt amazing, I got to be a big sister to a lot of mentees. I’ve created some bonds with the mentees, mentors and staff and I would like to have this experience again. SBL has impacted me in so many ways. I always had people there for me whether it was my mentor team, the staff, the teachers or mentees, it made for such an amazing Summer Program. There was always love and support in the program. I really grew as a person. SBL has taught me to step out my shell and try new things..” —SHERISA BAKER



“ SBL has impacted me by making me come out of my comfort zone, making new friends, and stronger relationships with people. SBL has also helped me to become a stronger leader because I actually got to listen, learn, help, and give advice to the people around me. SBL taught me to be patient when it comes to working with youth.”

—DESHAWINTAE DALE

“ I felt being a mentor was an amazing opportunity to establish connections with youth. It gave me an opportunity to make money over the summer, and to gain some vital leadership skills that I’m sure I’ll utilize in the future. SBL has taught me that patience is a virtue when dealing with different personalities.”

—SALMAAN MOHAMED

“ It felt good being a mentor. SBL had a positive impact on me because I really wasn’t sure of what I wanted to be after high school but through SBL I found out that teaching is for me. Also, SBL taught me that it’s not too late to change yourself for the better.” — ASMAA MOHAMUD

◆
◆
◆

Victor Phillip

DAHDALEH BUILDING

Who said change can't be good! This year our Summer Program had a new home at York University, specifically the Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building. Access to a different space could have felt like a structural nightmare, but in reality it added a fresh vibe to the program. The youth were able to enjoy large classrooms that easily facilitated group work, which further aided collaboration amongst the students, mentors and teachers. This site was also a prime location as it was so close to many of our afternoon activities, allowing for easy transitions between events.

With the amazing weather we had this summer, students were able to enjoy cool classrooms, lunch and workshop spaces that kept them cool. Daily access to comfortable temperature spaces, and up to date technology, helped to maintain student engagement to deliver relevant and differentiated curriculum.

In addition to these aspects, which do assist in academic success, our program operating on the York University campus has allowed young people direct and early exposure to the post-secondary environment.



Our Program

MORNINGS IN THE CLASSROOM

A vital and integral part of SBL's Summer Program is the morning classrooms, but an SBL classroom is unlike any other. These classrooms are intentionally designed to offer mentees a plethora of supports, from mentors in every classroom to teachers who have a deep and meaningful understanding of the community context and backgrounds of students. The teachers deliver a curriculum that includes social and life skills, math and English language instruction. For all of this hard work, mentees receive their first High School credit. We have found that when the mentees are embarking on their high school journey armed with an advanced credit they are more likely to find success during their high school experience.

SBL classrooms are unique because of many factors. First, SBL class sizes are intentionally kept low. This allows for more specialized instruction and individual attention for each student. When the class sizes are kept low, mentees are able to get more one on one time with each mentor and with the teacher. Teachers employ critical lessons in a fun and supportive environment which ensures that each student can be guided on their own individual path to success. Another factor to an SBL classroom is the constant use of music, technology and visuals to keep students attentive and engaged throughout the morning!



ON TIME AND READY TO LEARN

We strive on making sure that our youth are prepared and have everything that they need to be successful and this includes transportation. We never want transportation to be a barrier for youth participation. This is why we always had and will continue to provide transportation in our summer program!

We have school buses that pick-up mentees, volunteers and mentors from the local middle schools Oakdale and Brookview as well as another bus at Firgrove P.S (a mid-point in Jane and Finch). The youth are picked up every morning and dropped off every afternoon, which speaks volumes of SBL's commitment to break down barriers and improve outcomes for youth in the community.



Our Program

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES



Following a morning of learning, the afternoons were full of various activities that continues their learning in another way. Keeping active and being creative along the way was our goal for each summer. From learning new skills in martial arts to self-love workshops, mentors and mentees got a chance to explore different activities all across their local post-secondary campus, York University.

The mentors took a huge lead in the afternoon activities with support of their recreational staff members and facilitators. With extensive program planning and game collaborations, they did an amazing job in providing a unique experience for the mentees. Activities lead by youth for youth has proven to be a better way for students to positively engage in new activities together. Our group of mentors who are senior students used this time to get to know students outside the classroom on a more personal level and build relationships that have the potential to last a lifetime. For many it was their first time partaking in certain activities and they absolutely loved it!

WEEKLY TRIPS

After a long week of working towards personal academic goals, students had a chance to explore various parts of the 6ix (Toronto according to our youth). Stepping outside of their communities' broadens their perspectives. Students often comment on our field trips, saying these trips provide new settings and have created unforgettable memories.

The youth had a chance to experience downtown's waterfront at Woodbine beach where we had a DJ and a catered BBQ while playing field games, such as tug a war and flag football. We explored spaces closer to home like The Rinx and Go-Karting where students enjoyed competitive games with the mentors. Branching out to our neighbouring cities for remarkable memories at the wave pool, bowling and last but not least Wet'n'Wild Toronto! I'm pretty sure we all didn't want the summer to end.



Our Program

MENTOR TRAINING

Before our summer program began, we had a series of trainings that were designed to build the capacity of our mentors. We wanted to ensure that when the summer program started, our mentor team was well equipped. As a collective, we went through the importance and the impact of mentorship and how long lasting these relationships can truly be; and conflict mediation and how to plan programs for the afternoon sessions.

Furthermore, mentors learned the skills needed to plan programs for their mentees whether it be in an indoor/ outdoor space and how to be an excellent support in the classroom. Majority of our mentors were previous program participants and volunteered in the program. One of the successes of our program is our growth model (being a mentee, volunteer and mentor) and the continued dedication, energy and leadership that our mentors bring each year!



TRACK & FIELD DAY



This is a time to try something new! Initially it seems intimidating to some of our youth. Once our mentors explain its an opportunity to have fun and not to focus on it being a competitive environment, our youth warm up to the idea of participating in the events. Many of the youth were able to develop a new skill or enhance an existing skill that they already had, all the while having fun! A lot of love was felt from those sitting at the bleachers cheering on their peers and mentors!

For those youth that were trying an activity for the first time, they felt comfortable knowing that they had their mentors coaching and encouraging them every step of the way! Track and Field day helps our youth to not only try something new, but to also be physically active!

Our Program

PLAY DAY



This event is by far the most energetic day to take place during our six week Summer Program. Water activities were most popular among the mentor activity planning. Students were warned the day before to bring a change of clothes because nobody was leaving dry! Enjoying Play Day at York University's baseball diamond field was the best decision staff made.

These activities emphasized teamwork and it was quite intriguing how the youth pulled together and made the best of it. The youth ended the evening with a big water battle! Setting up for Play Day was a timely task in terms of preparation, but it was definitely worth it and remains to be one of the most successful days in SBL's Summer Program!

LAWS

We love collaborating with other organizations in order to expose our youth to new opportunities. One organization that we partner with every summer is Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS). The LAWS program provides an introduction to the criminal justice system using real life scenarios. At the end of the session, our youth participate in a Mock Trial that includes having a role as a bailiff, judge, witness, jury and lawyers!

From this experience, our youth get to discover what it takes to become a lawyer and some even decide that this is a possible career that they would like to pursue in the future!



Our Program

MOVIE DAYS

Every student wants to go to the movies with friends, so why not incorporate that into their weekly activities. Many of our mentees have the assumption that they have to travel to big malls to enjoy a movie. Instead we brought it right to them on the York University campus. Every Thursday afternoon, the youth got the chance to unwind and enjoy a movie like atmosphere at the Nat Taylor Cinema.

From outbursts of laughter to suspenseful moments in particular films like Tomb Raider, Jumamji, Jurassic World and Gone Too Far, the youth relished a relaxing afternoon with their friends. Youth often left the cinema full of excitement discussing the film recently watched. When asked if they enjoyed the movie a reply from a mentee was, "yes, I will definitely watch it again!" The youth really appreciated movie days, as It's important to have some down time during the week.



CAREER DAY

One of our many important mandates at SBL is exposure to different experiences, which also includes our annual Career Day. Midway in our program, our site lead Nastassia Subban planned a Career Day that features speakers from diverse fields such as a pilot, barber, international teacher, make-up artist, and a sale/marketing researcher in order to expose our youth to all the different career possibilities that exist. It is also important to have Career Day for SBL youth because representation matters.

All of our speakers reflect the demographic of majority of youth in SBL. Career Day is a turning point for many of the youth in the program and at the end of it there were many students saying, "I can do that too". Our youth got the opportunity to ask questions for our career panellists and were able to understand the importance of following your passion.

Our Program



HIPHOP CURRICULUM

In order for SBL teachers to make the Summer Morning Classrooms engaging and intriguing, they must incorporate their students' passions and interests into the classroom space. The Hip Hop Curriculum helps them to do that important work of making the classroom come alive with reference material and lessons that reflect the mentees' world. Hip Hop as a musical genre and a style and way of life is a big part of the SBL mentees' world (and mentors too!) This summer SBL teachers incorporated the Hip Hop Curriculum into lessons of math, English and financial management.

In addition, the Hip Hop Curriculum helped SBL teachers to facilitate in-depth and critical conversations around marginalization and resources in our city. As always, the SBL mentors and mentees demonstrated their intelligence and courage when navigating these conversations which shows that when our mentees are inspired, the sky is the limit!

PARENT NIGHT

Although the SBL program had a new home on the York Campus this year, we were back at Osgoode Hall Law School to host a very important evening, SBL's well-attended Parent Night. This event is an opportunity to not only meet the parents, guardians and loved ones of our youth, but also a night dedicated to enriching dialogue about their child's next steps. The journey to high school is filled with excitement, inquiries and at times apprehension that are all discussed amongst the parents, SBL staff & teachers, and mentors. Mentors and staff helped to spear head the presentation by giving parents details about what their children have been doing at the Summer Program and the specifics about the role of the mentor.

A World Café style approach took place where parents rotated to different stations. This facilitated a comfortable environment in which to talk about; the supports SBL offers during the school year at Westview C.S.S., parent engagement, course selection, programs connected to York (Ace & Readers 2 Leaders) and perspectives specifically relevant to our community, Jane & Finch. The success of this evening was highlighted in the results of our survey, as over 80% of parents indicated that they felt confident that their child was benefiting academically from the SBL Summer Program and would recommend the program for other children or students!



Our Program

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout our Summer Program we have guest speakers come in to provide wisdom and guidance to our youth. This year was no exception as we had members from the community, a mental health worker and a current law student that came by to share their journey to success and to inspire our youth about their own personal goals. The guest speakers had a huge impact on the mentees and the program. One of the mentors came up to our site lead Nastassia Subban, and said, "I am so glad you had her (one of the guest speakers) in. She is doing exactly what I want to do in the future and I got her contact information."

Furthermore, the guest speakers provide a new network for our youth in the program whereby if they ever do have questions in the future they can always reconnect. In turn, this creates new opportunities for mentorship. At the end of each session, our youth were engaged and motivated about their future!



KIDS UP FRONT: BLUE JAYS GAME

Our longstanding partnership with Kids Up Front has made possible many different opportunities. So much so, that even when SBLers make requests to check out different sporting events, Kids Up Front goes to bat for them and makes these requests come to fruition! This summer was no different.

On Saturday July 21, a total of 40 SBLers including: mentors, volunteers, mentees and staff attended a Jays game cheering them to victory against the Orioles. What's summer without a trip to the ballpark?

Our Program



FACULTY OF EDUCATION SUMMER INSTITUTE

Every year we partner with the Faculty of Education which hosts the Summer Institute – the premiere educational event before the launch of the school year in September. And every year we participate through volunteering, attending and putting on an SBL workshop to add to an already impressive roster. This year the title of the conference was “Realities in Data: Who counts...What counts...Who's counting?” which explored the political and pedagogical challenges and possibilities of identity-based data collection, integration and reporting. The conference explored the potential of using data to address systemic barriers within education as well as the best ways to use data to create programs and policies that positively affect student access, engagement, achievement and well-being.

The SBL workshop this year focused on our very own research project which is already underway. We detailed our methodology, which as per SBL's mandate is to make youth central to everything we do, so because of that we made Youth Participatory Action Research as the main basis of the entire project. Tes and Sam presented with PK, who is one of five Youth Researchers hired to work on the project. All five Youth Researchers are former mentors which extends even further our SBL Growth Model!

RSEKN 

Our Program

NUTRITION & SUCCESS

Who doesn't love free and good tasting nutritious meals? The importance of breakfast tends to be underrated among youth despite breakfast being the most important meal of the day. Each and every day the students are provided with wholesome meals before taking on the classroom and embracing an active afternoon. On a day to day our students had the opportunity to taste different restaurants within the community while staff tried to exercise the significance of making healthy food choices.

During lunch, youth use that time to get to know their peers, mentors and teachers. Mentors also exercise this time to get useful feedback about activities and tweak program planning.



GRADUATION



The evening opens with a Samba drumming performance by our mentees and mentors and throughout the evening features dance and vocal performances from our mentees. It was a room filled by laughter and cheers from families, friends, stakeholders and community members who also bear witness to 101 grade 8 students receiving their first high school credit. The night also recognized the hard work of our volunteers, recreational staff members and our mentors who are all fundamental to the success of our program.

After a night of celebrating community success, we closed off our graduation ceremony with a video that recapped our entire 6-week summer program and invited everyone to the foyer for refreshments, snacks and our crowd favourite cupcakes created by an SBL Alumni.

Partnerships



YORK UNIVERSITY

SBL being able to shift gears and transition our program from Westview C.S.S. in the summer creates an opportunity for the youth to access another space in their community, specifically York University. Over the years we have continued to witness the value of hosting the SBL program on York University's post-secondary campus. Early exposure to the university environment creates a level of comfort and belonging that becomes embedded in the psyche and heart of both the mentees and mentors.

Accessing the various spaces on the campus from the morning classrooms to the afternoon accommodations to enjoy the enrichment activities of; gym, dance, martial arts, drama, etc. were made possible from the support of York University's Faculty of Education. We are thankful for their assistance in navigating the complex system of booking spaces on the campus.

SBL has appreciated working collaboratively with various departments such as; The York University Faculty Association Community Projects and the York Centre for Education and Community as both have enriched our experience on campus.

We continue to look forward to building upon our established relationship with York University and exemplify the benefits of community and post-secondary institution partnerships. We are also excited as 9 of our graduating mentors (14 in total) will be York students this fall and we wish all of our SBL Alumni that are new York students this fall success as they work their way toward becoming York Alumni.



Partnerships



TDSB

There are various parts of the SBL program that have benefited from our partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

Our mentees worked so hard earning a total of 101 credits, and with the support of Continuing Education, these youth in September will walk into high school with an extra pep in their step as they sport their first high school credit! Not only did the new high schoolers earn credits, 8 Co-Op credits were awarded to senior students, our mentors, assisting with them getting one step closer to graduation. We are also thankful for the staff that Continuing Education provided as we were able to continue strong leadership from Nastassia Subban as Site Lead, and maintain engaging classrooms with our amazing team of teachers. This piece is very valuable as ensuring a positive, caring, and fun learning environment greatly contributes to our credit accumulation success.

The major glue of the SBL program are our mentors, who get to experience 6 weeks of employment thanks to Focus on Youth. This branch of the TDSB assisted in not only providing our youth with valuable work experience, but also the ability to build meaningful relationships with younger youth in their community. The opportunity to create bonds also extended to adult allies such as; the teachers, SBL staff and networking with the numerous guest speakers representing different professions and careers. In addition, the support of transportation, and nutrition from Focus on Youth were fundamental to the success of our Summer Program.

SBL's home during the school year is at Westview C.S.S. with the support from Principal Mr. Gala and our local Superintendent Curtis Innis serves as the foundation for the Summer Program every year. Being able to always have full registration comes with the continued support from the administration team along with the Guidance Counsellor's of Oakdale and Brookview. We greatly enjoy engaging with the grade 8 students throughout the school year to give SBL a presence to build early relationships that were vital for a successful Summer Program.

Partnerships



YOUTHREX

For five years, YouthRex has helped us tell the story of SBL's Summer Program. Through evaluation, YouthRex works with us to highlight SBL youth and detail SBL's impact in our community throughout the summer. This year, YouthRex in partnership with SBL staff developed evaluations that captured the experiences of mentees, volunteers, mentors, teachers and staff.

Because of our partnership with YouthRex, we are able to keep our evaluation methods up-to-date and critically relevant. Evaluation that is appropriate only helps to improve SBL's programming, making for a better Summer Program experience for all involved!



◆◆◆
Profile:

Marcus Lawes Wedderburn

STUDENT

“

Marcus Lawes-Wedderburn is a polite, humble individual who has grown and matured significantly over the past six weeks. He states, “SBL has made me feel ready to go to high school and get good grades.” He continues, “I feel comfortable knowing that the SBL office is in Westview because if I ever need help I can come to you guys.” With the one of a kind unique classroom support SBL models, students are able to receive more one on one help with understanding the academic material.

When Marcus was asked what he liked most about his classroom over the summer he said, “I liked that I got to listen to music while I did my work and the assignments weren’t boring because Mr. Smith didn’t have us sitting all day, I even got to create a super hero as an assignment. Mr. Smith is a dope teacher because he plays different educational games.”

Even though Marcus describes his middle school experience as fun due to the number of sports teams on which he participated, SBL’s Summer Program was by far the best program he has attended. He expressed his love for his mentors by saying “Anytime I need help a mentor is always there for me. I don’t get a chance to slack in the mornings because they always made sure I understand the work and completed it. In the afternoon I love playing runs in the gym with the male mentors, they are getting me ready for ball in September.”

At the end of the program Marcus was asked how the SBL program has prepared him for high school, he responded by saying “It gave me a credit before starting school, I feel more confident entering high school cause I have a better understanding of the school work and I know I can complete all my assignments because if I ever get stuck my mentors will help me.”



Profile: Abdi Aden VOLUNTEER & Ekram Maye

“

Last year, Abdi Aden and Ekram Maye were mentees in the SBL Summer 2017 program who were earning their first high school credit before coming to Westview. Abdi and Ekram still maintained a relationship with SBL during the school year by regularly attending our SBL after-school program and trips! In anticipation of our 2018 Summer Program, there was an increased demand from the former 2017 mentees who were all interested in applying for the coveted role of SBL's volunteer coordinator. The requirements for this role is that all interested applicants had to write a paragraph of why they wanted to be SBL's volunteer coordinator, submit a resume, and complete an interview with SBL staff. The volunteer coordinator role was previously held by SBL staff members, but now places leadership in the hands of a grade nine student where they have the opportunity to lead and train new weekly volunteers. Furthermore, the volunteer coordinator is in the SBL Summer Program for three weeks instead of one, which results in the volunteer coordinator receiving one hundred twenty hours each!

Abdi and Ekram were both interviewed by SBL staff members Shanaz and Shyanne who were impressed



by their maturity and their responses during their respective interviews. Abdi was the volunteer coordinator for the first three weeks of the Summer Program and said that "it was nice to build relationships with the mentees as the volunteer coordinator. This experience will help me in future jobs." While Ekram was the volunteer coordinator for the last 3 weeks of program, and has said that being the volunteer coordinator was "truly amazing and that this role has helped me to improve my leadership skills and to build my confidence into becoming a better version of myself."

Both Abdi and Ekram have worked extremely hard in their roles and built many solid relationships with the mentees. Furthermore, Abdi and Ekram truly capture the SBL growth model – starting out as a mentee in 2017, being current volunteers in the SBL's Summer Program through the volunteer coordinator position, and both have expressed an interest in becoming an SBL mentor in the near future!

Profile: ◆◆◆
Rodney Osei-Nuako
MENTOR

“

Rodney Osei-Nuako's journey with Success Beyond Limits began four years ago as a mentee in our Summer 2014 program. Throughout his 4-year journey at Westview, Rod has always been a constant face in our program by attending SBL events, trips and regularly attending our after-school program. At Westview, Rod would make it a daily routine to come visit the SBL space at least once a day to greet the SBL staff with a smile on his face! After going through our growth model by volunteering and becoming a mentor this summer, Rod was a favourite amongst his mentees and others in the program.

Rod has a balance of being friendly and funny, while still being able to do what is asked of him. Rod's qualities also include being reliable and having a positive attitude no matter what – even when he had an injury on his foot from home he was still able make it to the program the next day! Rod's journey to success was not always easy due to the many barriers that existed especially being a young Black male living in this community, but Rod was always positive and motivated that he



wanted to better his life for himself and his family. Rod graduated this past June and will be attending George Brown College for Graphic Design.

As a mentee, Rod has always had a passion for designing and drawing even so that our space is filled with sketches of his work and now he is going to turn that passion into a career! We wish Rod all the best in his future endeavours!

SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS

Profile: Mauricio Araya

TEACHER

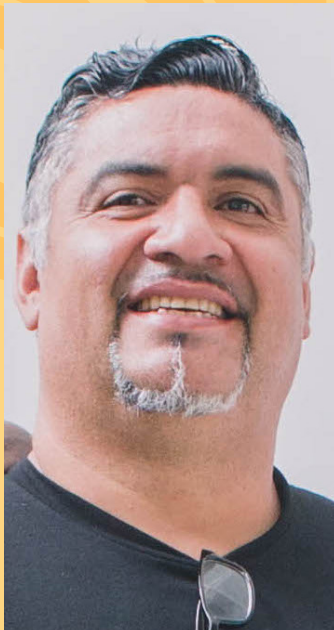
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When did you start with the program?

I started teaching in the SBL Summer Program in 2010.

What prompted you to apply?

During the school year I teach at Oakdale which is one of the middle schools that feeds into Westview. One day, I was fortunate to have stumbled into the SBL Presentation at my school. Their presentation was so full of life and energy and the students looked so engaged and interested. Many of the students had already heard of SBL's famous Summer Program and the energy and enthusiasm in the school auditorium moved me so much that I decided right then and there to apply. I loved what the program had to offer to the students and I thought I could be a meaningful and contributing member of the team. I have worked with SBL practically every summer since.



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

I have learned many important lessons both professional and personally working with SBL over the years in the Summer Program as a teacher. First of all, I learned that classrooms designed with students in mind, with the right supports in place – both inside and outside of the classroom – students can thrive! I learned that a dedicated, committed and passionate team of teachers make such a huge difference and that high expectations should be the norm – for any group of students!

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

Mentors are a key and integral component of the SBL classroom over the summer. First of all, the mentors know the students much more deeply than teachers do when the program begins. Secondly, the mentors stay with students the entire day even after the morning half day of instruction. Because of all that, mentors are very important! They are the important bridge between teachers and students, they are seen as leaders and role models by the students and are always a source of inspiration for students to obtain their first high school credit!

Profile:

Darren Aning & Margaret Sam

MENTOR AMONG MENTOR

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Each year for our annual SBL graduation, our mentor team gets to decide on one mentor from their team that they felt demonstrated leadership, built strong relationships with the mentees and gave it their all this summer. For the first time in SBL history, we had a tie between two of our mentors – Darren Aning and Margaret Sam. Both Darren's and Margaret's relationship with SBL began four years ago where they started the program as mentees and were looking to obtain their first high school credit before coming to Westview. As volunteers, Darren and Margaret built meaningful and strong relationships with the younger youth in our school-year programming and were eventually hired as SBL mentors! Darren has been a mentor with SBL since the summer of 2015 and Margaret has been a mentor since the summer of 2017.

Darren's strengths include being reliable and hardworking, and demonstrating strong leadership skills and Margaret's strengths include taking initiative, being dependable and being able to build meaningful relationships with the youth in our program. When asked about how he felt about receiving the Mentor Among Mentor award, Darren said that "I felt gratitude just knowing that my peers appreciate my hard work and realize that what I'm doing is for everyone



and the betterment of the program. I was very happy to win the award." In addition, when asked how she felt about receiving the Mentor Among Mentor award Margaret said that she was "grateful knowing that others recognized my efforts as a mentor".

Both Darren and Margaret have been consistent faces in the SBL program for many years and we wish them both the very best as they continue their studies in September! Darren will be part of the Concurrent Education program at York University and wants to become a teacher in the Jane and Finch community because he wants to show the next generation of youth from the community that they are greater than the negative stereotypes and that they too can make it the same way he has! For Margaret, she will be majoring in Children's Studies, at York University and wants to become a Child/Youth worker because she has always had an interest in working with youth and her experience working with SBL has helped her to further her passion in this field. We loved working and watching the growth of Darren and Margaret in the SBL program, and can't wait to see what the future holds for these two!



Profile: Shyanne Witter

STAFF

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Shyanne Witter's journey with SBL began nearly eleven years ago in 2007 as a mentor in the program. Shyanne was a mentor for three years and won the coveted Mentor Among Mentor award consecutively each summer.

After high school at Westview, Shyanne attended Humber College and studied Social Work. Initially however, Shyanne was interested in becoming a mechanic, but due to working with youth for so many years as a mentor with the SBL program she decided to pursue social work. Shyanne decided to pursue social work because "helping people was part of my nature and I wanted to give back to the youth in the Jane and Finch community". After graduating Westview in 2010, Shyanne still maintained a relationship with the program by transitioning into a role of recreational staff member. In this position, Shyanne was able to use her previous experience as a mentor to help new mentors in the program to reach their full potential and to give it their all each time.

In October 2017, Shyanne transitioned into the role of a core SBL staff member where she is currently the After-School Program Coordinator and was also a recreational staff member in



our most recent Summer Program. The many generations of youth that have known Shyanne in the capacity of a mentor, recreational staff member and now a core SBL staff, love Shyanne's resilience, caring nature, her ability to join in activities and have fun with the youth! Shyanne's love and dedication for SBL is evident as she says

"SBL means many things to me. It's a strong support system that many students within the neighbourhood lack. It's a resource centre for when I need information, and has given me many opportunities to expand my network. They have been that shoulder to lean on and that ear to vent to when going through personal difficulties. Overall, SBL is a family away from home, a charitable organization that will have your back until the end. Finally, when there is no way, SBL makes the impossible possible."

Profile: Matthew Alay

REC. STAFF

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Success Beyond Limits is always proud to acknowledge the stages of development many of our youth experience as they transition through our growth model. Matthew Alay is an excellent example as he entered the SBL summer program as a mentee in 2008, and became a mentor in 2010. However, his continuation and connection with SBL didn't stop after he graduated high school as we were excited to welcome him back to the team once again in the capacity of a Recreational Staff. Furthering his passion for learning and entrepreneur endeavours, Matthew completed a carpentry apprenticeship and this year started his own business Alay Carpentry. Even as an owner of his own business, Matthew saw the value in giving back to SBL as he expressed, "Even after getting into my dream career I wanted the youth to understand you can have whatever you want but when it comes to helping those who have helped you get to where you wanted to be, that's like helping family and it's always good to lend a helping hand...because you will be blessed in return."

Matthew supporting those in a role he once had and demonstrating his support for a program that assisted in his own educational and career advancements meant that this year's mentors



had the opportunity to learn from a veteran who's strong leadership style created a positive environment for growth. His ability to encourage the youth to try new things, exhibit respect for themselves, peers and facilitators while building genuine relationships helped his afternoon group flourish. Matthew echoed this sentiment of success as he stated, "I had an amazing experience being a rec staff because I was able to mentor the mentors. Also connect with the youth. I enjoyed being someone that the students can talk to about some personal things going on in their lives. Also to have the position to take on a bigger leadership role organizing and also to be counted on knowing I can get the job done."

SBL is very proud of Matthew and the positive example and role modeling he displays for the youth. We truly value his ongoing contributions and consistent sincere contact he has maintained with the program and staff. We wish him continued success with his business and deeply appreciate his dedication to SBL.

Profile: Idill Mohamed

FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY

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Sharing stories is vital to the work that we do and each year we encourage a young person to help share that story. This year we had Idill Mohamed, a former program participant, document our summer experience through film and photography.

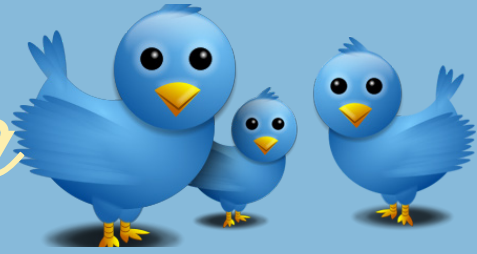
First let us tell you a bit about this phenomenal young lady. Idill started off as a mentee in our summer program in 2014, it was not until just over a year ago she developed an interest in photography. Her photos captured the landscapes of Toronto and more specifically the Jane and Finch community that is her home. SBL was looking for a photographer and also a videographer who can capture and highlight our summer program for 6 weeks. This position entailed creating weekly slideshows that highlight the previous week; this role also includes creating videos that do the same. Our summer program is full of moments to capture. This includes the morning classrooms, the bus routines, breakfast, lunch, guest speakers, major event days, and the afternoon activities. Idill was great in managing her time each day and being as productive as possible. There are multiple activities that happen simultaneously each day and it takes good organization skills to know what to capture and when each day. Idill did an amazing job taking



initiative and working independently throughout the summer. Our graduation ceremony concludes with an 8 minute long recap video that took an enormous time and effort to put together. An audience of 300 community members received the graduation video very well.

It's also worth mentioning Idill has never done this before! She initially made it clear her comfort zone is with photography but has not yet explored videography. Keeping in mind she is only a year into her craft as a photographer, we knew she learns quickly and this program aims to work with young people and allow them to make mistakes along their path to greatness. We provided the supports and worked closely to ensure her environment was conducive to learning. Within the first week it was made clear she can do it on her own and her comfort zone grow to include videography. Her next steps include completing her post secondary education with a degree in Nursing from Seneca College.

Media



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