

## YCC Student Panel Discussion

Speaker 1: And welcome to our Career Connected Youth, Faces of Success panel. We are so excited to have all of you here in the audience, as well as watching virtually online across the country. This is our exciting panel of students from four different high schools that have won the youth career connect video challenge.

And we have students from Anson High School, Gladstone High School, Pike High School, and Putnam County High School. So let's, before we get started, take a second to give them a round of applause and congratulate them. [APPLAUSE]

Speaker 1: Wonderful, so what we're planning to do today is hear a little bit from the students about their experiences in their programs.

And also hear a bit about what it took to develop and create these wonderful videos that you're all going to be able to see today. So we are going to get started, we've got a lot of great stories here. We've had fun the last couple days with the young people, and we're going to learn a little bit about their experiences, and learn what their schools are doing as it relates to Career Connect.

So with that, let's get started, we are gonna pass it over to My and Nunu. So My and Nunu, tell us a little bit about yourselves, just introduce yourself and then tell us a little bit about what it took to make this video that we're about to show the audience.

My: Hello, my name is My, I am an uprising senior of Anson High School in North Carolina, and I'm Nunu's older sister. [LAUGH]

Nunu: Hi, I'm Nunu, and like My said, she's my older sister, I'm an uprising sophomore, and about our video, I did all the editing.

You'll see in the video that I'm not in it, but that's because I'm directing her on what to do, adding audio, transitions, just editing altogether. And we made this video over our two-week winter break? Yeah, we worked on it for two weeks, so a lot of procrastination, but it came out good.

My: The purpose of our video was to let the audience see a student's perspective in the YCC program, in this case, it's going to be me. We chose to tell my story because I'm the older sister, I have every right to do it. [LAUGH]

My: No, I'm just kidding, the main reason why is because I am the leading class of YCC. So I have more experiences and more stories to tell you on what YCC has to offer, I'm in the IT pathway. [LAUGH]

Nunu: I'm also in IT.

Speaker 1: So now we're gonna go ahead and take a look at this awesome video.

My: My name is My Vue, and I am in 11 grade, I attend Anson High School in Wadesboro of North Carolina, and I'm a part of the Youth Career Connect STEM Academy.

Youth Career Connect, or YCC, is a program that offers students involved in a STEM pathway that will lead to a prosperous career. But I'll tell you more information about it later in the video. Very little people know about my culture, and it's Hmong. As with any culture, we have our own type of food, clothing, and of course language.

To give you a little history of Hmong, my people are originally from China, but migrated downward to Laos and Thailand. Having parents from a third world country, you can imagine what their dreams are. Having a big family, enough for their children, the American dream. I have eight siblings consisting of seven sisters and one brother, four brother-in-laws, and seven little rascals called nieces and nephews.

Another trait of mine is that I love to draw, drawing is something that I grew up with, and lets my

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imagination grow, it's what makes me a bit more unique from the rest of the group. In my classes I always found ways to incorporate my artistic abilities with what I was learning.

As someone who daydreams a lot, I like to dream about the possible and the impossible, and how to use my abilities to help possibly make a change. While scanning videos in YouTube, I found one that inspired me in so many ways. Great, big stories video, when the oldest kid in class is 69 years old, touched me.

I think to myself, what can I do to help people, not just in my community, but globally as well? What I like most about school is the diversity that surrounds out campus. The diversity includes hearing many different opinions and ideas from various people. I enjoy courses that makes me challenge myself, even if I have unsuccessful attempts.

Those attempts are learning experiences to help me improve. Finally, the opportunity to learn from experiences and cultures of our diverse staff and students. And of course, like any other teenager, I enjoy being able to socialize with many different people. As I said earlier, YCC is a program that offers four career pathways, and provides a focused STEM pathway in the areas of biomedical sciences, engineering, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.

This program earns a grant from the US Department of Labor, Aston High was 1 out of 24 schools in the nation that was selected to fund our grant request. Information technology, or IT, was the pathway I selected, being the leading class with a new STEM academy, I have been selected by our director to serve as the STEM academy IT assistant for my work based learning internship.

To smooth, I would bring my background and experience as an IT intern student. During this summer, our director, Miss Deborah Davis, assigned me at our administration office, to learn about networking and hardware and software skills and technology. With the minimum of 135 hours, I definitely learned hands on skills of reimaging a computer, installing desktop computers in labs, installing software and hardware for laptops and desktops.

Moving computers to different locations, and meeting with my supervisors. During the fall semester, I participated in a second internship that allowed me to focus on my creativity and digital media aspect of technology. I was presented with tasks such as photography, creating graphic fliers and posters, school video contests, and these tasks has been used to document accomplishments of YCC academy for the year.

[MUSIC]

My: Each student brings a unique vision and personality to our family. I am an artist inspired by my culture, and driven to achieve success to better my community and country. Our YCC family's made of students like and unlike me in all the best ways. My name is My Vue, and this is who I am.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 1: That is so awesome, I know I've seen this video now a few times, and every time, it just puts a big smile on my face. Can you tell us just a little bit more about the process of making this video with the drawing, and then the behind-the-scenes logistics.

My: So I've seen in a video, I placed my hand on a board, and there was a kind of stop animation going, it's called stop motion animation. And those kind of projects are hard because one picture per frame is, if I mess up one little detail, I have to start all over and it's just like, my goodness, it takes a long process to do.

Nunu: I don't really have anything to add on, but,

Nunu: Okay, so we used a camera to take pictures of every frame, and I used an editing program

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called iMovie to put together the frames, and it ended up looking like it's synced together.

Speaker 1: Great, well, that was awesome, thank you so much.

We're gonna move onto Gladstone High School, and we have Carlos and Melissa. So Carlos and Melissa, please introduce yourselves, tell us a little bit about who you are, your pathway as well. And then tell us how you made your video that we're about to see.

Carlos: First of all, I want to say thank you for having us, and I'm Carlos Fernandez. I am 18 years old, and I just graduated high school. [APPLAUSE]

Melissa: I'm Melissa and I'm an uprising junior at Gladstone High School.

Speaker 1: Pathway?

Melissa: I'm in the medical pathway.

Carlos: So yeah, I'm in the medical pathway as well, our video, we wanted to make it very much interview based.

We also added shots from a drone thanks to, well, with some help from our YCP counselor, Mr. Mojica, he helped us with that very much. And we also wanted to really showcase the skills that we learned at YCC in our video, and that's what it's mainly about. It was also, I wanna add, really hard with our schedules to do this video, with my AP testing and with Melissa's rigorous schedule, so yeah, it was a lot of work to make this video.

Speaker 1: Awesome.

[MUSIC]

Carlos: Hi, I'm Carlos Fernandez, I'm in the YCC Program in the Medical Academy at my school here at Gladstone. I've been in the medical program for two years, I joined my junior year, and I am now a senior.

Melissa: Hi, I'm Melissa, and I'm a tenth-grader at Austin High School, I'm in the YCC program, medical pathway, at Gladstone.

[MUSIC]

Carlos: In the YCC program, I've learned some very practical skills that I will need to know, if I was to become a nurse or something similar in the medical field. Like minor surgery prep, CPR, first aid, and standard precautions.

Melissa: I've learned a lot of hands on stuff, like vital signs, and I've learned surgical prep, surgical scrubs, I've done urine testing.

[MUSIC]

Carlos: My favorite experience or most memorable one is joining HOSA. It's a medical competition where we got the chance to fly to Sacramento. And we got to compete against other schools and

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other students in medical-based competitions.

Melissa: Well, I was competing in biomedical applied science in Sacramento, and I got first place, so that was really fun.

I didn't think I was really [INAUDIBLE], but it's not what most people think, where it's just, all you have to do is study, it's all academic. It mostly is, because that's how you win, but you also get to meet new people who have the same interests as you.

[MUSIC]

Carlos: What's unique about this program is its relevancy the real world. Because It teaches you applications that are very much needed in the job market now.

Melissa: Personally, it just it allows me to advance in what I want to do. Because I know exactly what I want to do, like, I want to be [INAUDIBLE] oncologist.

It helps me prepare for college, and I get an internship, with helps a lot. And then, like, the field trips we go to, it just, it really exposes you to the outside world.

[MUSIC]

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 1: Another great video, do you guys want to tell us just a little bit more about the making of the video and what that process was like, if there were other folks involved?

Carlos: Making the video was somewhat difficult, we've never made a video like that before or any video.

So we actually had some help from our counselor, and I had a friend who really helped us kind of guide us in the right way to make the video come out the way it did.

Speaker 1: How long did this take you?

Carlos: Probably a couple weeks?

Melissa: Since our schedules were so difficult, the filming took about a week, and then the editing was another week, but we pulled it off [LAUGH] .

Speaker 1: Yeah you did.

Melissa: Somehow.

Speaker 1: Awesome, thank you so much, all right, let's move on to Pike High School, we've got David and Kate Lynn. So if you can introduce yourselves and talk a little bit about the making of the video.

David: Hi, I'm David Astrada, I'm 18, and I also graduated from Pike High School, Indianapolis, Indiana.

[APPLAUSE]

David: And my career pathway is the IT pathway.

Caitlyn: Hi, everyone, my name is Caitlyn Glass, and I graduated from Pike High School, as well.  
[APPLAUSE]

Caitlyn: My career pathway is in the IT pathway, and when we were making this video, we really wanted to showcase how much of a family like environment we have at the YCC program at Pike. And we made sure to incorporate a lot of who makes this program so enjoyable. So we had our engineering students, our IT students, biomed, manufacturing, and logistics, along with our teachers, outside partners, mentors, and community partners.

David: Another thing that helped us out with this video was the laptops that were given to us through the YCC.

Using these laptops, we were able to have a better understanding of teamwork, working with the videos, so we had the radio and television class, they did most of the editing. There was one person, her name is Maya Stafford, she isn't here, but she did mostly the entire editing of the video. Caitlyn did script writing, I filmed some of it, I didn't know I was filming for this video, but I did film some of the. [LAUGH]

David: I also made the music for the entire video, and I narrated it too.

Speaker 1: Awesome, let's take a look.  
[MUSIC]

Jaylon: Hi, my name is Jaylon Jackson, and I'm a senior of the graduating class of 2017 from Height High School. I'm going to Purdue University in the fall of 2017. I'm majoring in landscape architecture. I took a trip with the YCC program to Purdue School of Agriculture. And while we were there, they taught us how to do different things.

And one of it was landscape architecture. And they had us do a model of a park. And then I was like, this is really cool. But then the next couple of days I couldn't stop thinking about it, and kept just coming back. I was like I could have added this.

And we can put a slide over there, so it wouldn't go away.

David: What is Youth Career Connect? Youth Career Connect, or YCC, for short, is a grant funded by the US Department of Labor. This extraordinary program engages students in four very important career pathways. Such as manufacturing and logistics via medical science, engineering and information technology.

Joe: Joe Grissom and I am graduating in 2017

Caitlyn: My name is Caitlin Glass and I am a senior

Brian: So I am a Junior in high school, my name is Brian McClain.

Dennis: Dennis Walker, I'm a senior.

Joe: The YCC students are more interactive with all their programs.

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Caitlyn: I would say that a YCC class is way more hands on. It gives you the opportunity to really work on the material and get a better understanding. And it also helps you reinforce the idea, opposed to a normal math class or English class.

Brian: Having a laptop gives me so many opportunities that I couldn't be able to do otherwise. If you, programming classes, I can experiment with things. I can try out new ideas and just really do a lot of really neat stuff that is applicable to the business world.

Dennis: What makes YCC unique, it feels like a family type environment, how they work. So when you're doing group projects you know what to expect from each other. So basically that's what makes it different.

Jamila: Jamila Nassar I am one of the YCC career counselors.

Jennette: I'm Jeannette Craw. I'm the workforce liaison for the Youth Career Connect program.

Jamila: What makes it unique is the mentoring programs, internship programs, and the opportunities for field trips. Because I think that giving students experience in career fields, gives them more information to make decisions about what they do when they graduate from high school.

Jennette: Our students had one to one technology, they get to have opportunities to try out new devices they wouldn't normally have, like our 3D printers and other things.

Matt: My name's Matt McReel, and I'm part of a group of what's SOGETI USA. So we're local employer, so we're a big fan of creating local jobs. And we're actually directly invested in high school, we do this group called Girls Code, so we're directly involved in that. And you have the goodness of YCC that brings some of the assets to computers or the programs, the classes. But I think accessing people, especially in the community. If a student can talk to someone and say, what is your career, what are these things like? Then that gives them something to aspire to. I would hope then that we also have mentoring.

David: Pike High School appreciates the network of teachers, community partners, and business professionals who make the Youth Career Connect Program unique.

YCC provides a rigorous yet engaging academic environment accompanied by career focused opportunities for all students involved.

[MUSIC]

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 1: Okay I feel like we sort of need to ask. What was going on with that baby? [LAUGH]

Speaker 1: No one was harmed in the making of this video, we're assuming.

David: Well-  
[LAUGH]

David: I don't know what to say to that. Those are engineering students, and-

[LAUGH]

Caitlyn: We have very bright and creative students. [LAUGH]

Speaker 1: Okay, awesome. So last, but not least, we have Putnam County high school. And Raymond and Destiny are old hands at this, because they were here, if you remember last year They were also last year's video challenge winners and got to go to DC and-

Raymond: I'm Raymond Ewing. I'm a rising senior at Putnam County High School, and my pathway is IT.

Destiny: Hi my name is Destiny Kieu, I'm also a rising senior at Putnam County High School, and my pathway is healthcare and academic core classes.

Raymond: So for those who remember last year our video was very interview driven. We got to see all aspects of the Yes program from students, to teachers, to even people who hire our students as interns. But this year we want to try something a little different so we decided to do a very script driven video. So that way we can kind of control the pace of it and add in a lot more extra details, that last year it was all about the people. But this year's it's all about the program.

Destiny: So for our video, Ray and I worked on the script together. We added a lot of photos from the experiences of the YES program. And there's a voice-over, as well, and Ray edited the video.

Raymond: Yeah, and also the filming was about a week before, and then, also, it took about a week to edit everything and get that together. So, it was a fun experience, I liked it.  
[MUSIC]

Destiny: In 2014, Putnam County was chosen of 24 other schools around the nation to be given a special grant for the Youth Career Connect organization. The youth funds were used to create a daughter program. Youth Empowerment for Success, or often referred to as YES Program. YES Program took care of money aspects that many students may find troublesome, in getting their dual enrollment and going into high demand industries.

Here at Putnam, tenth graders take the accuplacer test to be eligible to enter such programs into the pathway that interests him or her. Whether it be health care, welding or information technology, PS program brings students all the way to their senior year with trips, hands on experiences, advances in their classes and certificates that are available.

Every year, VS students required to go on one of the several college trips that the program organizes. These trips may be fun, but they are also very helpful to a student to find a college and show the variety of post-secondary education after high school. Dual enrollment classes, also make their own trips that will help students, each trip is geared to help the student attain and apply already learnt material.

These opportunities to travel are one of the things that make the Yes program unique and effective. Students of Putnam County High School. Such trips are followed by a lot of hands-on experiences. Books can teach a lot of theory instructions, but applying that theory to a class project can be a great experience as well.

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This experience is important to eventually lead the student to job shadows and other opportunities. Practicing on mannequins and circuit boards builds confidence in the student's ability to perform and apply his or her knowledge to the job. The constant use of hands on projects in new classroom, that you can't find elsewhere, prepares the future welder, nurse, and electrician, with the industry they want to go in.

Nicole: Being able to do it hands-on here gives us a better experience, so that, when we go to clinicals, or when we become certified and have a job, we know how to do it on an actual person, as opposed to just a mannequin.

Destiny: These experiences are what helps the student get ahead in the class, along with the Move On When Ready program.

This helps the student advance through the pathway of efficiently.

Clinton: I've taken 13 courses over the three years I've been in the welding class.

Destiny: This opportunity is unique to the S program and allows students to meet their credentials at his or her own pace. These opportunities prepare students with a college level technical skills in high school.

This is important for students who want to achieve as much as they can, and is a unique experience in the YCC program. Students are given confidence and benefits of taking the courses by saving both time and money in the long run of getting his or her degree. The student may even graduate with several degrees to their fields thanks to the YCC program, and he or she will have a head start with their career.

[MUSIC]

Speaker 1: [INAUDIBLE]

And they've prepared some answers and then we're going to move out to the audience, so think about some questions that you want to ask our students. So, who wants to take the first one? What do you like about the program and what insights have you had about yourself as a result of participating in this program?

Raymond: One thing I like about the YCC program is the amount of guidance there is, like the teachers and also the counsellors like to help guide you through. Because when you are that young it's pretty scary to think that college and high school God I'm not even ready for high school yet. So the amount of guidance for such a wide variety of classes out there is really helpful, that's what I like about the Yes program. And the YCC program gave me insights about myself is that I love IT. I always have been kind of a computer kind of guy and like dealing with those, but IT helped me explore that and helped strengthen that love for that.

Destiny: So So, with the effort in, we're able to take college courses in our high school setting. So if you're not comfortable with driving to college and taking classes with college students. The YCC Program offers these college classes in high school setting where you're around your friends and you get to you still get a college based learning, but yeah.

Caitlyn: So something that I really liked about the YCC program at my school was that I was able to be a part of a club called Business Professionals of America And I really, really like that Crowd Plus organization and YCC did a lot for it and I was able to place first in our district competition.

[APPLAUSE]

Caitlyn: Thank you. By being able to place first, I got scholarship money as well, so that was really nice.

David: Something that I like about the program is the opportunities that it gives to many students, like it gives you a certain amount of time, it gives you more time than rather just picking a career field your senior year without the program.

Having and going to college for that career field and then discovering that you actually this and you don't want to do this. Being a part of this program gives you more opportunities and more chances to see what you actually want to be a part of.

Speaker 1: Yeah, and any insight you had about yourself, other than learning the things that you didn't want to do?

David: I learned, I found myself wanting to do more with video, music, and broadcasting, because I took coding classes. And then I took a music class because I thought I wanted to produce music and do all that. And then I realized I didn't really like coding, and I didn't want to be a full time producer. But I actually liked showing my experiences, showing the music I like, and showing everything I've basically done in my life, so I kinda wanna be like a broadcaster..

Melissa: All right For my program, it's the medical pathway, and it gives me the opportunity to compete in HPSA, Health Participation Students of America.

And I competed in Sacramento, and I got first place in biomedical laboratory science. [APPLAUSE].

Melissa: So that was, it was really helpful because I knew I wanted to go into medicine, going into the medical pathway, but once I competed in that I realized I wanted to go into more research-type of things than being an actual doctor.

And it helped me realize, like, that this is what I really want to do, because I was a little unsure when I entered high school and now, like, I absolutely know that's what I want to do.

Carlos: My answer is very similar to the rest of them. The opportunities that the YCC Program has given me has really shown me the or have given me guidance as to what career pathway I want in my life.

And doing HOSA as well, I participated, I did not place, but it was totally fine, I got the experience, which is what I really wanted. And just being able to participate and do all of that really showed that I very much have a love for the medical field, so I would really want to do that with my life.

Speaker 1: All right.

Nunu: Ok, so what I really like about YCC is the exposure to jobs. Cuz when I was younger, the only jobs I was really exposed to was a firefighter or a teacher, but now that I'm in YCC, I see you could be a software programmer or you can create the computer itself and I really like that.

I realize that I no longer want to be a teacher, I really just wanna work on the computer and program softwares and such.

My: Like the others said before, the program gave me many amazing opportunities to make myself stand out, especially when I started to applying for colleges in North Carolina.

Not only that, but the amazing YCC staff from Langston, Mr. Bose, Mr Jordan, and Miss Carol back there. Encourages me to do the best that I can do and takes on charges that are way out of my comfort zone. Being in a program that has a rigorous curriculum and a positive guidance really

enhanced my tech for development ahead of middle school.

Speaker 1: Awesome, great. So here's the one question I bet everybody's curious to hear what you have to say about. If you were in charge, would you make any changes to the program? If so, what would those be?

My: If I were in charge, I would let the students take more electives.

My and during my 11th grade year, I couldn't take any art classes, which I really wanted to do. So, my schedule was already pre-chosen and I just didn't have time to take art. Well, I took one art class in my sophomore year and so I'm way behind from my friends in high school.

They had more experience in art and I really wanted to upgrade my skills and my artistic ability.

Nunu: I really like YCC the way it is, I think it's really organized and it's really helpful, but I would like to be able to take more than just IT classes.

Because the pathways do overlap, like we saw in the hospital. It seems like they're going more into the IT side, so it's just not Biomed.

Carlos: If I was in charge, I would probably add more of the pathways to my school personally. At my school, we only have the medical pathway, and integrating the IT and the engineering, I feel like would really help other students there to find their way and their career in life.

Melissa: I would agree with Carlos, too, because our school only has like only one of the pathways and I know other kids would want programming stuff. And I think more schools should get these pathways, because when I tell people from other schools about my medical pathway, they're like, my gosh, I would want to do that at my school.

So it would be better if more schools had it.

David: What I would add, being a video editing person, myself, I know there's only one class, which is radio and television, but I didn't really hear about it or anything. I think there should be more classes for video editing, for music producing, sales and promotions, some more stuff in the telecommunications field.

Caitlyn: So, I really like the program the way it is as well. Something that I really just kind of want to keep encouraging is to make sure that teachers continue to go to different conferences. That way they can learn and grow their students cuz it is always so exciting to see a teacher come into the classroom and be like, guess what I learned at this conference last week.

I'm so excited to teach you guys. That was just like the best thing ever because it was so great to see our teachers growing with us. I loved it so much.

Raymond: I have had like a similar thing, I have had like a similar thing to like David.

There's not a lot of college courses offered with telecommunications or film, but there is sort of like a skills USA thing there, so luckily I was able to get my industry assessment in the ninth grade. And really get experience in that, but I really wish there was sort of like a college opportunities for film, like film studies and such, so that may be something I might change about the chart.

Destiny: So there are other schools, there are college professors who really influenced my life, and I just, I wish that we had more college instructors coming to our school. But the yes, program is making up for that because they're actually gonna provide transportation to these colleges and where we can learn with the college students.

But I wish that there were academic core classes offered at our school besides online classes.

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Speaker 1: All right, great. So what advice would you give to other students thinking about their futures, or students who may not have been on a career pathway, or have a career pathway in mind? What would you tell them?

Raymond: I think is that when you're that young, you're pretty nervous. But still, reach out. Like there's a lot of people out there who want to be there for you and help you out. That's not just their job but it's their passion as well.

We are scared. We are growing up. We're in a high school. We're awkward but we also wanna learn. And that's my advice to the others, it's that reach out, we are very helpful. And just take charge of these opportunities offered to you, cuz there's nothing like this out there.

Destiny: Yeah, I just wanted to say that it's okay if a student does not know what they wanna do right now. Like these opportunities given in high school, it gives us a chance to dip our feet in the water of all these different pathways, to know what we do wanna do in the future, or what we don't wanna do in the future.

It helps us reinforce our future plan, and I just feel as though so many students are stuck on this idea of, you have to know what you're going to major in in college, as soon as they get out of high school. But that's not how it is. It's just experiencing all these things and what taking these experiences and choosing it based on, choosing your future based on that.

Not necessarily like a strict plan forward after high school.

Caitlyn: So, something that I think is really good and to encourage other students to take classes in high school, cuz high school is the time to do this type of stuff because classes are essentially free. It's not as expensive as college and so you won't come out with a major that you'll probably never use again.

But the really cool thing is, in high school, you're able to get dual credit through these classes. So the dual credit could also help you out in the long run when it comes to going to college. Or you can also get certified in a certain pathway and maybe that will also help you out in the long run as well. Cuz if you're not sure what you wanna do, you'd have that certification to where a business may take you because you have that skill set.

David: I would say look at the cards that are being dealt to you. Explore your opportunities. Reach out to people, like Raymond said.

Reach out to people, your counselors, your teachers. Ask them questions about everything. I have a saying that one of my music directors always tells us. Is closed mouths don't get fed. So, you have to ask and question everything in order to seek what you want, get what you want.

Melissa: Personally, I think that a lot of students, they're given these opportunities, but they don't really know about them or they don't know exactly what they are. They're unsure and they don't want to do it. So I think if they knew more what it was, what they would be given, then they'd be more likely to take these classes.

So it gives you the opportunity to figure out what you kind of want to go into before you go to college. Like my mom told me, she's actually a teacher at my school, so she knew about the medical academy, and she knows that I love it. That's why I went there.

And so, she was like, a lot of people will go into college. They'll take these classes and pay for these classes, and then realize they don't want to do it. So then, she encouraged me to go into the medical academy, so I could figure out if I really wanted to do it or not.

So I think that's what a lot of students should do, just to figure out kind of what they wanna do.

Carlos: My advice would be, be flexible with yourself and what you can do. I don't feel that having this mindset of knowing what you wanna do right away is appropriate.

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I feel like that limits yourself, and what you could do. So being able to take very different perspectives and experiences will allow you to very much choose what's right for you. Because in the end, we just want to be happy with what we've done, and we don't wanna just be stuck with something we've planned throughout our whole lives, and then not like it.

Nunu: For me, my advice would be, it's okay to not know, it's completely normal. Most kids don't even know what they're doing at the moment, so how are you going to plan your future? But I think it's best to have a broad idea, cuz as you go into your broad idea, you'll specify and you'll see the things that you can do.

My: Like the others said, it's all right not to know what you plan to do forever. You'll eventually figure out when YCC provides these important resources. But you also need to keep in mind, that if you want your future to be glamorous, or have a lot of money, you can't just sit around and wait for a miracle to happen.

You're not like Kim K, [LAUGH] and so you need to step up and decide what's best for you. For example, if your friend's in the biomedical field, don't be like, she's my only friend, I'm only going to go in there because she's in there. You have to decide what's best for you in this program.

Speaker 1: All right, and then the last question that I have before we turn over to the audiences, what's next for each of you? What do you think your next steps are, and I know we've got a few graduates here, so who wants to start with this one?

Caitlyn: I'll start first, so I plan on attending college this fall at Indiana University, Purdue University of Indianapolis, with a major in informatics and then a minor in business administration.

David: I'm attending Ball State University in the fall, and I will be majoring in telecommunications. And eventually I want to move, I have a podcast right now, I want to move that to the radio station they have at the university, and eventually have my own show on it.

Speaker 1: Awesome.

David: I think it was yesterday, it was last night, I just got a fellowship from the Hispanic scholarship fund.

Speaker 1: My gosh, that's awesome. [APPLAUSE]

David: I don't know for how much money. [LAUGH]

David: But I got a scholarship, so-

Speaker 1: Great.

Raymond: My plan for this year is to finish up senior high school, and hopefully not just walk across with a high school diploma, but also get a degree in [INAUDIBLE] .

Destiny: My plan as well is to finish senior year strong, since the YES program, we can, because we've taken so many classes over the last two years, we can eventually graduate in winter. So we can graduate in winter instead of spring of 2018, but the YES program really opened my eyes to taking advantage of these college credits that I'm going.

So afterwards, I hope to apply to University of Georgia in the fall.

Melissa: I'm gonna continue in the medical academy, because I absolutely love it, and then, I got lucky enough to take it. I will be taking all four years, but some like Carlos wasn't able to start his freshman year, so he doesn't get the opportunities that I do.

So when I'm a senior, I can take this test and it will give me the opportunity to get certified, so I can work as a medical assistant, and then I can work my way up from there in hospitals, going to college. And I still have two more years left, but I really am hoping to go to Trinity University and major in molecular biology and biochemistry.

But, I mean, I still have two more years, so I don't know what's going to happen.

Speaker 1: [LAUGH]

Carlos: What's next for me is, in the fall I will be attending University of California, Irvine. And my major is gonna be biological sciences, and the goal is to go to medical school and become a doctor.

[APPLAUSE]

Nunu: Next for me is, I'm gonna continue high school through the YCC program, and the IT pathway. And I'm going to apply for NC State in North Carolina, and I want to major in something to do with computer science. I'm not sure specifically yet, that broad thing fits me right now, and I want to minor in business.

My: I honestly don't know what I wanna major in, [LAUGH] but I'll have to figure it out eventually. Right now, I just know I have to finish my senior year of high school and apply to a good college. What I do know is that I want to study abroad, so hopefully I can find scholarships to do that.

Speaker 1: How are you gonna use some of your drawing and artistic abilities?

My: I'm not quite sure, cuz my parents are against the art career field, so we'll have to see [LAUGH].

Speaker 1: Might have to sneak it into some IT stuff. Well, thank you all for answering and sharing a bit about yourself.

I wanna turn it now over to the audience to ask questions, we wanna hear from you all, what do you wanna ask our students?

Speaker 1: What was your middle school program like?

Speaker 1: Was there any career exploration that you had at the middle school level?

Raymond: There was, for eighth grade, there's this opportunity where you can take an elective for a whole year, but it only counts as one elective credit class.

And for my eighth grade, I took one in intro to film, so because of that, I was able to get my industry assessment by the end of ninth grade. So then I could focus on going to internships, working at football fields, and just things like that. So there is a little bit at our middle school, there's also the opportunity to go ahead and take a health class.

So you can go ahead and focus on other classes when you get to high school, so you don't need that requirement yet, so just things like-

Destiny: So I was not like Grey, I did not take advantage in eighth grade, I took PE so I wouldn't have to take it in high school.

## YCC Student Panel Discussion

But I know that our hosted program, because they were talking about their hosted program, our hosted program is starting a hosted junior for our middle schools. So they're able to learn more about the club, and then they'll eventually come to the high school and be welcomed and compete, and hopefully win.

Raymond: Also, we have this thing call Summer Inspiration, over summer, teachers can come back and teach a little camp or so. This summer it was an honor to teach a camp about video. So they would take some middle schoolers and elementary kids who I hope to see rising into the high school eventually, and growing their skills there.

Carlos: If I could go, in middle school, unfortunately, there wasn't any opportunities like I had in high school. But what I mainly just did was, I took honors classes, a bunch of them, and basically just tortured myself over there. But I really wanted to build a strong foundation for high school, I could hopefully take those, get those opportunities, which I did, thankfully.

Melissa: Well I went to a private Catholic school, so I had absolutely no opportunities in anything. It was just, our class was, there was 30 of us, and you had this teacher, and these classes, you had no choice, it just happened. You're just going to school and they're like, you're doing this, and we would be like, okay.

So I had no opportunities, but I'm taking advantage of everything in high school, because I wish I had it in middle school, but, I mean, I'm glad I have it now.

David: I was just a normal kid in middle school, I didn't really do anything, but what I really did on my own time, I had a YouTube channel.

And I learned to edit videos through that, learned more of the filming [INAUDIBLE] editing life.

Speaker 1: Anyone else on middle school, other questions in the audience, right over here.

Speaker 19: First, let me say congratulations to all the graduates, very well done. And then another shout out to the artists, cuz I'm also an artist who's not doing art, which is very funny.

Nevertheless, what I wanted to say is because you're already in animation, you need to go that pathway, especially if you feel like this is really exciting. And there's so many well-paying jobs that are in that pathway, just explore. Your parents, they'll hop on board when they start seeing those checks.

So my question is, how would you really encourage other students, not just at your school, but maybe even within your state or even nationally, to really adopt what you guys have learned?

David: Basically, I would show them the benefits of being able to do all the stuff that we're doing. Having the skills that I have now, getting the opportunities that I have because I built up this skill. I have a brother who literally does not like to do anything, nothing at all. And I'm trying to show him, look, if you start doing these things, you'll get all these opportunities later in your life, so it's just basically just showing him the benefits.

Caitlyn: So I've been fortunate enough to go to a lot of females in technology conferences in my state. And I know that's just a group of people that we're reaching out towards, because it is a male-dominated work field in the IT department. And so we're really trying to get a lot more females in this career pathway, and I would at least start there by attending these conferences.

And making sure to let other females who are in my state, or nationwide, depends on like what kind of conference they go to. Just the benefit that I've had at my school, and just my experiences of being a female in technology, and all of the different certifications that I've been able to acquire to that

high school.

And I'm kind of hoping to work from there and build upon that, and maybe even go to other schools and talk about my benefits. When I was a junior, I was able to go to the middle schools that we have, cuz we have three middle schools. And I was able to go to at least two of them and talk to the younger kids, and especially the girls, and let them know that, hey, we need more women in IT.

Raymond: I think our school does a pretty good job of that with our youth, with summer camps, and also reaching out to them. When I was a rising ninth grader, I remember I wasn't even able to go to the YES program yet, but they still taught us about it.

They want us to know that this existed, please take advantage of it. And as far as getting out to other communities, I think that I would have to take responsibility and reach out to them, because they may not know what they're trying to look for. They may not know that Putnam County's a small town, but it has so much great opportunity, and you can be like this too.

Destiny: So I feel like, as Ray said, our school does do a good job with promoting the YES program, and of offering it to new students. So every summer, the YES program goes, it's not a meeting, it's really fun. It's where many businesses come in, and then they talk about how we should take advantage of this stuff, and then at the end, we get to swim.

But yeah, our school does a good job of that, but I think that many students fail to realize that this is the opportunity. And this is the time to take so many advantage of these opportunities. I know a lot of students who graduated and they don't know what they want to do with their lives.

But once they go to college, they're going to sort of regret not taking part in this program.

Speaker 1: Great, any other points on that before we move on to this next question?

Speaker 20: Many of us in this room were not given the opportunity for pathways. How has the directed pathway opened up doors that you never would've expected or anticipated.

Many of us, am I right, had no idea what we wanted to do at the end of high school, so God bless you all.

Speaker 1: Or the end of college.

Speaker 20: Exactly, or even college, but at least you have a direction. You've set out on a path, you're so far ahead of the game, it's awesome.

Speaker 20: If you didn't have these pathways, what would've happened to your life?

Speaker 20: You'd be like us. [LAUGH]

Destiny: So I took part of the healthcare pathway, and I always knew I wanted to go into the healthcare field. Because our school offers a CNA program, a nursing assistant program where we can take a test and then become certified nursing assistants, and work there at as young an age as 16.

I knew that I wanted to go into that pathway, but after taking those classes, it just reinforced my idea of future plans for me.

Raymond: Yeah, and to answer the question of, where would I be, I definitely wouldn't be here in Denver, I would say that, I wouldn't be in Washington DC last year.

Yeah, it's hard to imagine, cuz I came so far along, it's just, how did that trace so far, and that's just so many ifs and whens, what could I have done? I was a little nervous about what I was gonna do, I definitely had an interest in film.

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But that was before IT, that was before chemistry, that was before what the YES program showed me what I can do and what I love. So I honestly can't answer the question where would I be, but I'm glad I'm here. [APPLAUSE]

Caitlyn: This is the question that really, really applies to me because I've thought about this before. Before the YCC program, I always thought I was gonna be the high school student who never did anything that amounted to the end of my high school career. I thought I was just going to graduate high school and then I'd get into college and I'd be like, man, I don't know what I want to do, cuz I never had anything that drove me, I just thought I would just be living life Every single day, I'm going to school, and nothing.

But since the YCC program has presented itself to me, I have gotten so many great opportunities. I have a ton of certificates and awards that I can hang up on my fridge, and my dad can just look at me and be like, man, I'm proud of you, kid, and I really like that a lot.

[APPLAUSE]

My: So when the program was first introduced to me back in 2014, or 2013, I was a bit sketchy at first cuz I didn't know what this program had in for my future, but Before I chose the IT pathway, I was actually in the biomedical pathway.

I chose to follow my parents' wishes, and become somewhere in the medical field. My director saw a presentation that I made, and how I wanted to be a multimedia artist and animator. So she changed me to the IT school, and I don't regret it. I honestly thank her so much for changing me to the IT field.

Melissa: Well, honestly, I probably would have gone to college and done something I didn't want to do because I'm not even supposed to be at this school I'm at right now. I had to get a district transfer because I really wanted to be in the medical pathway, so I wouldn't be at this school, and I originally wanted to be a pediatric oncologist, and I realized, through when I was competing in biomedical like I don't really want to be the doctor.

I want to be the one behind the scenes is like in a lab discovering those cures for cancer instead of like being the doctor. So I would probably be like in college and then doing something I don't want. Realize it too late and have to like start over, so I'm really glad I had this opportunity.

Carlos: If I didn't have the YTC program I mean, let's go back. In middle school I remember that I kept saying I really liked math and I kept saying I want to be a mathematician and all of this stuff. And just but there was never really a real connection with it, it was just something that I guess it would make my family proud but with the YCC Program and getting the opportunity with medical, I had that opportunity to find something that actually drove me and that I had a spark with. So but if I didn't have it I would probably I mean same like other people said just lost and taking something I probably didn't enjoy.

Speaker 1: Questions?

Speaker 1: I have a few more minutes for a few more questions. Any last minute questions, for the group,

Speaker 1: Right over here.

Speaker 21: First of all, really proud of you guys, really proud. Could you just tell us about, yeah. [APPLAUSE]

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Speaker 21: Not any big philosophy thing, but could you tell us a really specific, just a learning opportunity that occurred at school within the internships or mentorships or something that stood out to you as a learning opportunity.

My: For me, I would definitely say the internships. My classes, it required for me to know the technology side of it, which was kind of hard for me to comprehend, because I'm a visual learner. If I don't have something in front of me, I can't learn it. But my second internship, I was allowed to use my creative side.

I was able to do digital media, graphic design, so definitely, the internships for me was the best experience.

Nunu: I can't say much, haven't really done much, but I want to be you internships like mine because I don't really know much about programming or rebooting and all that stuff.

I just look it up online and follow the instructions. But yeah, I think that the internships would be very helpful for me in my field.

Melissa: Well, for me, in the medical academy, I've already drawn some blood, and I've given injections, so it's really cool to be able to do such hands-on things.

But it also helped me realize, like yeah I liked it, but it's not really what I really want to do.

Carlos: To contrast with Melissa, I really [LAUGH] I really like learning the skills in my medical class. I'm learning how to draw blood, take someone's blood pressure, pulse and all of that. That to me, really stood out, I really liked that.

David: What I really liked was my internship that I got out of the blue. It really brought back those skills that I had with my YouTube channel. It brought back editing, filming and also graphic design and finally being able to do that podcast, we're a radio station in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Yeah, somewhere around here, yeah, I just realized that.

Caitlyn: Something that I really liked was when we would have our mentors come in. We would have mentors from other companies that were partnered with us. They would have employees sit down with students so you could talk about like what you wanted to do in college.

It was very insightful because, a lot of the time I wouldn't even think about certain things that I would need for a job setting. They would really help prepare me in a professional way. I like that.

Raymond: I really like the internship opportunities but like one of them I remember is going to work at a film production company which was pretty fun.

I enjoyed it. I went there twice and I made a couple of music videos with them and I worked as BP all sorts of positions opened up my eyes to what I wanted to do in film. But on the other aspect of IT, I remember trips that I took with Mr. Stone.

One of them was the Making Making Festival. But you just have all these brilliant minds come together from IT, engineering, and all sorts of Categories, and they just come together, show off their product, and help you,

Destiny: So through the Yes program, I was able to get a paid internship with a local business. And it was really fun. With internships, you grow connections, and so that will help you in the future, because the lady who hired me, she wrote my letter of recommendation. And she, with the letter of recommendation, she helped me get into this local program at our school. So we can, not local program in our school, local program in our community where we get to represent our school. I mean, it was the and they actually knew her, and so, with her letter of recommendation, She was a connection for me, sort of, so these internships that the program offers really helped me.

## YCC Student Panel Discussion

Speaker 1: And it looks like we have one last question over here.

Speaker 22: A number of you mentioned work based experience internships in particular so you gonna put our hearts on because most of us like myself have to go out and try to talk business into giving you those opportunities.

And you are on film so we gonna take advantage of this. You can talk directly to employers, why they should provide those experiences to students like you and more importantly the students behind you.

Raymond: Well one I think, we are the future. So we might eventually take up those positions, but we want to be prepared to take up such a big responsibility.

So providing those opportunities not only helps out the country in a general sense, but also be an individual who wants to be part of that, part of that bigger community, bigger country, to help us move along forward, both in an individual sense, but also in business and also as a country.

Destiny: So, our technology is always growing, and so we need to learn more stuff. Because everything is innovating and so I So these businesses should invest in students like us. And it'll help the future be amid right I guess.

David: What I like to think about is the art of giving back to your community.

Since we're the generation coming to be, we could pick up those spots that they're teaching. But we also, being able to take that knowledge from that internship, we can also give back to another generation that would be up and coming, too, so they can have that knowledge and expand on that.

[INAUDIBLE]

Speaker 1: All right, I think that we are ending on a good note. I wanna take just a second to thank all of you guys for all of your hard work on this video for coming along. We know that you've been having fun the last two days.

Thank you so much for sharing your insights. I know all of the folks here were absorbing and taking it in to think about how they can Impact their communities and their schools back home. So thank you to this group. [APPLAUSE]

Speaker 1: Let's take a minute and thank everybody.

[APPLAUSE]