WHAT IS Y ACHIEVERS?

Y Achievers is a national YMCA program designed to help teens set and pursue high educational and career goals resulting in graduation and acceptance into a post-secondary institute or adoption of a vocation. Y Achievers helps teens improve academic performance, develop a positive sense of self, build character, explore diverse college and career options, and interact with professionals who serve as role models.

Y Achievers is year-round, enrolling new freshmen each fall. During the school year, students participate in weekly after-school sessions and monthly Saturday Summits. Students also take part in job shadowing opportunities and college tours. During the summer, eligible rising juniors and seniors are provided the opportunity to work in paid summer internships.

Y Achievers serves students from varying academic levels. Students are identified through assistance from Communities In Schools site coordinators, school counselors, teachers, and administrators.

Origin & History

Y Achievers was first conceived in 1967 by Quentin Mease under the label Young Black Achievers of Houston at the South Central YMCA in Houston, Texas. The program was designed to motivate African-American teens to academic and career success.

In 1971, New York YMCA financial consultant and volunteer Dr. Leo B. Marsh adopted the Black Achievers program and extended the program model to include a forum that fostered ongoing interaction between African-American youth and adults who had distinguished themselves in their professions.

In 1987, the Y’s National Black Achievers Network (BAN) was organized to coordinate and promote programs at the local level. YMCAs across the country have adopted the Achievers program and there are more than 165 active programs today.

Partnership with School District

In partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Y Achievers serves students at Garinger, West Charlotte, West Mecklenburg, and Vance High Schools. The program is an initiative inside Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to help increase the overall graduation rate.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 1.2 million high school students drop out each year.

The current graduation rate in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is 81%.

Y ACHIEVERS SITES

Garinger High School
West Charlotte High School
West Mecklenburg High School
Vance High School

FOR MORE INFO

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WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM INCLUDE?

Monthly Summits
During the school year, all Y Achievers participants gather for monthly Team Summits on Saturday mornings where they interact with business professional “Team Coaches” who provide guidance and encouragement. Summit activities are based on the principles of college/career readiness and character and leadership development, and are designed to prepare students for current and future opportunities that exist within institutes of higher learning and the workforce. Summit subjects include Resume Writing, Business and Social Etiquette, Public Speaking and Goal Setting.

Weekly Afterschool Sessions
Y Achievers participate in weekly afterschool sessions at each participating high school. Afterschool sessions are facilitated by certified teachers and teacher assistants and include academic enrichment as well as leadership, character development and college readiness activities. The student to teacher ratio is 10:1, which is essential to guarantee students receive the individual attention needed to enhance their academic ability.

Job Shadowing & World of Work (WOW) Tours
During the school year, students have the chance to job shadow with local companies, an opportunity that opens their eyes to a broad range of career fields they might not have known existed.

Summer Internships
During the summer months, eligible rising juniors and seniors are provided the opportunity to work in paid internships in a career field of their choice. The students participating in these internships work 20-40 hours each week for six to eight weeks. Through a partnership with the Academic Internship Program with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, students also receive elective credit for their summer experience. In 2014, 45 students participated in internships with the following businesses:

- Beacon Partners
- Belk, Inc.
- Carolinas Aviation Museum
- Charlotte Ballet
- Charlotte Hornets
- Charlotte Regional Partnership
- Charlotte Works
- Firm Foundations
- Food Lion
- Jazz Arts Initiative
- Neet’s Sweets
- QCityMetro.com
- Rockwell Automation
- Second Helpings
- Tiny Techz
- Wastequip
- WTVI
- YMCA of Greater Charlotte

Global Service Learning
Y Achievers have the opportunity to apply for Global Service Learning trips which are coordinated annually by the YMCA. In 2013, two Y Achievers students traveled abroad to Dakar, Senegal in West Africa to visit a YMCA’s primary school, and one student traveled to Prague, Czech Republic for the YMCA’s International Youth Festival.

IS Y ACHIEVERS SUCCESSFUL?
During the 2013-2014 academic year, Y Achievers reached 238 students at Vance, West Mecklenburg and West Charlotte High Schools. In 2014, 98% of Y Achiever seniors graduated and 56% of participants improved their GPA.

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<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of students reached</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% GPA Improvement</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg GPA Improvement</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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The Y Achievers model has yielded significant outcomes that led to decreasing suspensions and increasing school attendance. Our goal in 2014-2015 is to launch a nationally recognized curriculum designed to better prepare students academically and socially.

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<tr>
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<th>Avg Unexcused Absences*</th>
<th>Avg In-school Suspensions*</th>
<th>Avg Out-of-school Suspensions*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y Achiever Students</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools**</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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*Number represent days
**Collective averages of Garinger, West Charlotte, West Meck and Vance

The overall success of the Y Achievers program is measured using initial, intermediate and long-term outcomes in the program’s logic model:

- 90% of students will learn something new about education and career opportunities each year they are enrolled.
- 90% of parents who attend workshops will increase knowledge about how to support their child's education and career goals.
- 85% of students will have established an educational or career goal by the end of their 10th grade year.
- 65% of students who start the school year with a 2.5 GPA or lower will improve their GPA by year end.
- 90% of students who are enrolled in Y Achievers at the time of graduation will graduate high school.
- 70% of students will enroll in a post secondary commitment (may include military, 2 or 4 year college, vocational program, etc.).

VOLUNTEER “TEAM COACHES”

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte depends on adult volunteers from the community to support the Y Achievers program by helping facilitate monthly Saturday Summit events. Team Coaches are business professionals who have an interest in working with teens and can commit to attend monthly summits during the school year. Team Coaches are required to complete an initial half-day training along with the corresponding “Prep Session” before each Saturday Summit.

- 92% of Team Coaches agree their volunteer service made an impact and contributed to achieving the overall program goal.
- 97% of Team Coaches would recommend the Team Coach experience to a family member, friend or co-worker.

“Being a part of the Y Achievers program is being a part of a community. A community of adults willing to provide guidance and support to an upcoming generation determined to succeed. It is a beautiful thing to assist the youth in the direction of their dreams, and in the process, you get to watch yourself blossom and grow. I’m thankful for the opportunity to volunteer with the Y!”
- Tamara Dorce, Team Coach

“The Y Achievers program is more than I ever expected. Not only did I feel blessed to have worked with some amazing kids, but I had the opportunity to grow and learn more about myself through the prep events. It has been my honor and privilege to watch these really great teens learn, grow and explore options for their futures.”
- Roberta Jacobson, Team Coach
HOW IS Y ACHIEVERS FUNDED?

We are able to offer the Y Achievers program without cost to families thanks to corporate contributions and corporate and family foundations. Y Achievers receives funding from Food Lion, UTC Aerospace Systems, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, US Bank Foundation, Fifth Third Bank, Project LIFT and Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD).