



**YOUTHCAST  
MEDIA GROUP®**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



YMG teaches high school students from under-resourced communities to produce multimedia journalism that highlights solutions to health and safety disparities where they live. They harness the power of their voices to creatively reflect, engage and empower their communities. In doing so, they also increase their college and career readiness and their agency.

**EDUCATE – EMPOWER – PUBLISH**

# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



**JAYNE O'DONNELL**

*Founder, CEO*

"I love YMG! Y'all are bomb."

That's what high school senior and aspiring physician Cheryl Eseke had to say about her work as a Youthcast Media Group® social media creator since doing a 2024 boot camp in her hometown of Hartford, Connecticut. Cheryl is attending Wesleyan University in the fall of 2025 on a full scholarship. (Bomb means great, by the way!)

Comments like Cheryl's — and we have scores more — have kept me going since our 2017 launch with 20 students in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. We've come such a long way. We became a nonprofit in 2019, got a big boost of funding in late 2020 and have trained nearly 500 youth in 19 states to tell their under-resourced communities' health and road safety stories.

I spent 28 years covering those topics at USA TODAY, often with local Gannett reporters. I loved my job. So it's incredibly rewarding to pay young people to learn how to cover these life-or-death topics locally with a national context.

In this, our first annual report, you'll learn about our programs that prepare young people to be confident communicators — and the results we've achieved.

Like Cheryl, they learn how to stay safe and healthy and the tools and skills to tell others. That serves them in any field they enter.

Our students learn about public policy, establishing their rightful place in the debate. Our instructors and speakers teach the historical context and proven remedies to factors that make their families and neighbors sicker and life expectancies shorter, despite U.S. healthcare costs being the highest in the developed world.

We've spent the past five years developing the curricula, programs and infrastructure to support students like Cheryl. Help us continue to pay teens so they can pay it forward — in their careers and communities.

Sincerely,

*Jayne O'Donnell*

Founder and Chief Executive Officer



*Jayne O'Donnell with, left to right, YMG intern Hermes Falcon, author and former Wall Street Journal reporter Lee Hawkins, USA TODAY Executive Editor for Investigations and Storytelling Romina Ruiz-Goirena and YMG intern Aabri Spear on a panel at Kaiser Permanente's Health Action Summit in April 2024. They discussed the need for diverse perspectives in the media.*

# HOW FAR WE'VE COME

2017-2024

Students have  
engaged in our  
programs

**620**  
TIMES

We gave students the tools and  
they went to work, generating

**347**

student  
bylines

**200**

stories

**430**

social  
posts



IN TOTAL, WE'VE RAISED

**\$3.1 million**

to support programs and  
pay students for their work

**99**

student stories have  
been published  
across

**32**

media outlets  
including...

washington  
**blade**  
America's LGBT News Source

PROVIDENCE  
**Journal**

MindSite  
News

The **DC** Line  
News, Views & Events

The Miami Herald

The Atlanta  
Journal-Constitution

**USA  
TODAY**

# PROGRAMS

# 2024

## CLASSROOM COLLABORATIONS

YMG instructors and journalist-mentors collaborated with student journalists at Annandale High School in Virginia and Bard High School Early College in Washington D.C. to create stories and social media posts. Students earned stipends of \$50-\$150.

 **69**  
students served

 **95**  
media projects



Jayne O'Donnell and Director of Content and Programs Brie Zeltner (on Zoom) meet with Annandale High School journalism students, left to right, Rossy Soto, Jasmin Dinh and Munira Khalif.

## STUDENT-MENTOR INDEPENDENT WRITING

Motivated students and interns were paired with journalist mentors to write feature stories that were published in local and national media outlets. Students earned stipends of \$75-\$270.

 **6**  
student-mentor pairings

 **5**  
stories published



### Four Years After Her Husband's Killing by Police, Dominique Wallace Opens Up About Staying Strong for Her Five Kids

Four years after her husband was killed by police during a mental health crisis, Dominique Wallace is working to overcome trauma and help other survivors.

BY ZAHIYA DANIELS & NICOLE CHRISTIAN, YOUTHCAST MEDIA GROUP® • INTERVIEW • DECEMBER 16, 2024



# 180 YOUTH-PROGRAM ENGAGEMENTS

**80%** Female

**53%** Black or African American

**33%** Hispanic

**9%** Non-binary, trans, or genderfluid

# PROGRAMS

# 2024

## BOOT CAMPS AND WORKSHOPS

Instructors and journalist-mentors worked with students in our writing and social media workshops and boot camps—delivered virtually to students across the U.S. and in person with students in Hartford, Conn. and Arlington, Va. Students produced news briefs, feature stories and accurate, fact-based videos and graphics for social media. Students earned stipends of \$100-\$250.

 **83**  
students  
served

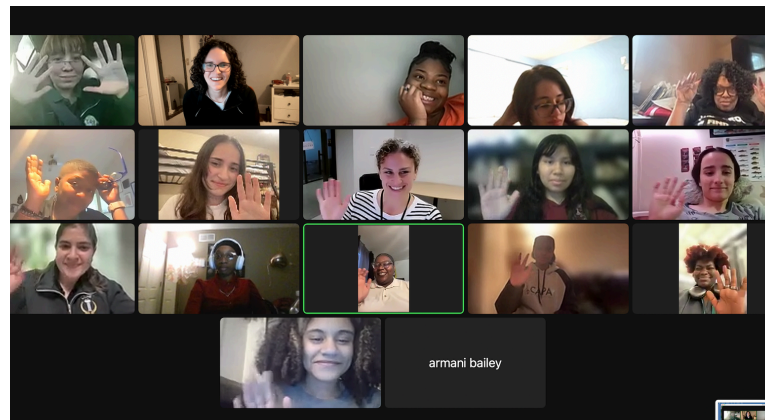
 **175**  
media  
projects

## SOCIAL MEDIA CREATORS

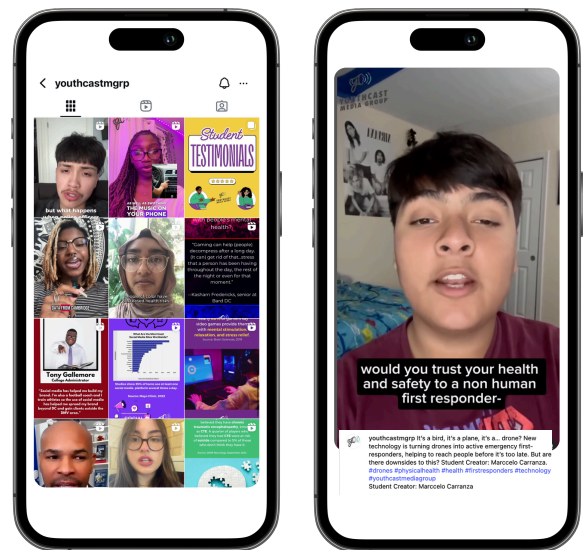
In YMGM's "Creators Club," students filmed, edited and added captions, graphics and B-roll to fact-driven social media posts on health equity, safety and mental health topics. Students earned \$45 per post.

 **22**  
independent  
student creators

 **97**  
student  
videos



*Students and YMGM journalist-mentors during the Spring 2024 Equal opportunity workshop. Thirteen students from Miami, Philadelphia and the D.C. area wrote about equity in access to higher education where they live. Their stories have been published in NABJ Black News & Views, Go! Latino and Fairfax Times.*



# 91%

**OF STUDENTS WERE INSPIRED  
TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR  
BECAUSE OF THEIR WORK  
WITH YMGM**

# TESTIMONIALS



*Shaunavahn Reid*

YMG student  
Columbia University,  
Class of 2029

"I recently received a full ride scholarship to Columbia University and this accomplishment is a testament to all the people and experiences I've had in my life. One of those experiences is YMG. **YMG has always been an inviting and wonderful community**, that encourages youths to **become a part of something and speak about important topics** that many people sometimes overlook."



*Jasmin Dinh*

YMG student  
Annandale High School,  
Class of 2026

"In my sophomore year I had not planned to continue taking journalism into my junior year. However, **working with YMG opened my eyes to journalism as a career path**, or at the very least something I could participate in during my high school years. I liked being able to write about and share the lives of students, whether they were well-known or just an ordinary person."



*Cristobal Garcia*

YMG student  
University of Connecticut,  
Class of 2029

"**Working with YMG improved my ability to analyze information, think critically, and communicate effectively.** These skills have been **invaluable** in tackling assignments and projects in both high school and college courses."



*Mariamawwat Endalkachew*

YMG alumna  
University of North Carolina,  
Chapel Hill,  
Class of 2027

"I was definitely better prepared for my journalism course in high school, but also the majority of my college courses since they mainly require me to write essays. I think **YMG helped me improve my writing skills in different ways which reflected positively in my academics.**"



# TESTIMONIALS



*Donna Desormeaux*

Journalism teacher,  
Bard High School Early  
College DC

"I look forward to working with YMG again next school year with a new class, new topics and fresh ideas. Bard students came through with [YMG's] help, and I look forward to a continued partnership with YMG early on to build relationships and explore new media avenues... **For these students to be recognized for their very first journalism stories made such a contribution to their educational endeavors.**"



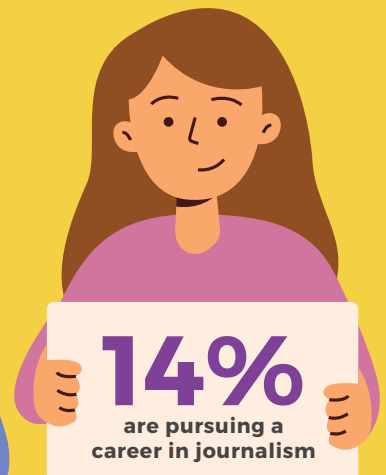
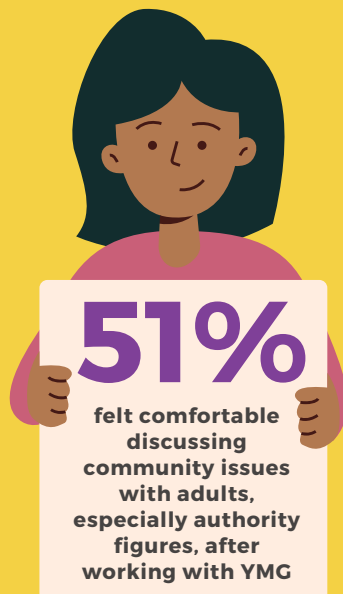
*Alan Weintraut*

Journalism teacher,  
Annandale High School  
(Va.)

"**My students flourish under the guidance of the experienced YMG journalists.** They share their **decades of real-world knowledge** when my students pitch story ideas, begin to cultivate sources and questions to ask, and do the final edit and polish their stories. The **YMG instructors are enthusiastic and patient** with my students. The **one-on-one attention** YMG gives my students enables them to write with deeper meaning and flesh out nuances of their stories with interviewing experts from the health field."



## OUR IMPACT



# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## 2024 SUMMARY

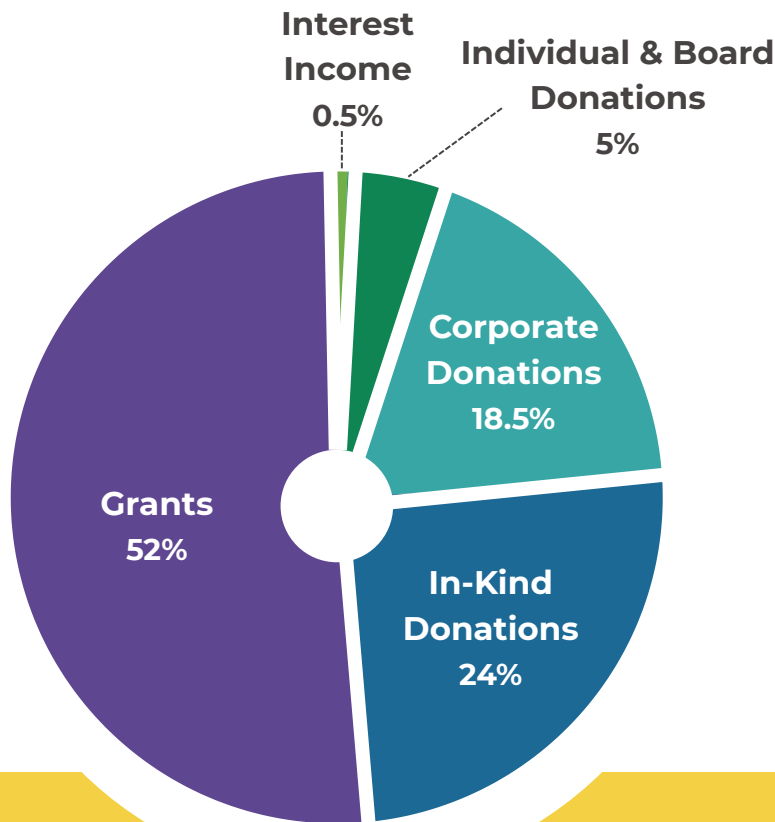
# 27.4%

Increase in revenue\*

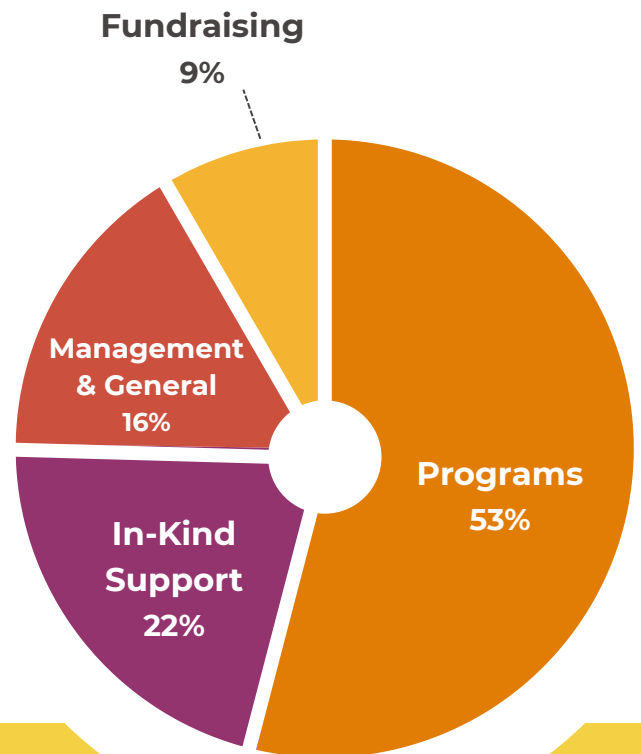
2024: \$540,319

2023: \$423,891

\*Revenue excludes in-kind donations



**Revenue**  
**\$713,494**



**Expenses**  
**\$798,147**

### Notes:

- Grants and Corporate Donations may apply to overlapping fiscal periods. YMG records the receipts as revenue in the period received.
- The Fund Balance as of Dec. 31, 2024 is \$179,509.
- In-kind donations/support represent pro bono legal services valued at \$173,175.
- The above amounts have been reconciled to the Form 990 for tax period 2024.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## ROZ OVERSTREET GONZALEZ

**Board Chair** *Executive Committee*

"Working with and supporting young people as the Board Chair with YMG gives me great joy! YMG's dedicated staff helps young people to hone their listening and writing skills and prepares them for future careers that can include journalism, health care, public policy and law. YMG exposes participants to real-world events and helps them to build confidence in themselves. To use an old adage, 'If you can believe it, you can achieve it!' YMG is doing amazing work!"



**MYLES CAGGINS III**  
**VICE CHAIR**

*Executive & Finance Committees*



**DAN D'AGOSTINO**  
**TREASURER**

*Executive & Finance Committees*



**ANNA KRAUS**  
**SECRETARY**

*Executive Committee*



**JONATHAN ADKINS**  
**DIRECTOR**

*Finance Committee*



**DANZELL BUSSEY**  
**DIRECTOR**



**TORINE CREPPY**  
**DIRECTOR**



**JAYNE O'DONNELL**  
**CEO**



**MARCY  
OPPENHEIMER, M.D.**  
**DIRECTOR**



**CARMEN  
RAMOS-WATSON**  
**DIRECTOR**

# WE MAKE HEADLINES!

IN X F S | SUBSCRIBE

ROUTE  
FIFTY

Connecting state and local government leaders

SEARCH →

## How teens can be safer drivers



STANDRETI/GETTYIMAGES

By Jessica Chen,  
Winnie Chan and  
Daniel Oloju,  
Youthcast Media  
Group

APRIL 1, 2024

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the U.S.  
Will raising the requirements for a driver's license help?

PUBLIC SAFETY

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE



NEIGHBORHOODS

## Community gardens can help combat rising food insecurity in Philadelphia, but their future is uncertain

Many exist on formerly vacant lots that have little protection from development.



by Imani Greene-Berry, Amaya Hopkins, Saoni Lorenzo, and Imara Stewart May 31, 2023

The Providence Journal

HEALTHCARE

## They are recovering from drug addiction. Now, they're helping others in Rhode Island.

Sreehitha Gandluri and Jayne O'Donnell Youthcast Media Group

Published 5:01 a.m. ET Feb. 17, 2024 | Updated 5:01 a.m. ET Feb. 17, 2024



U.S. Politics Sports Entertainment Life Money Travel Opinion

Politicians

Add Topic +

## Baltimore City Council President Brandon Scott readies his mayoral equity, safety platform

Maia Spoto, Jada Johnson and Jayne O'Donnell USA TODAY

Updated Aug. 31, 2020, 1:04 a.m. ET



Search...

## High school students press for more real-world education

By Ste'jonn Gibson, Destiny Clay & Angely Peña-Agramonte

Youthcast Media Group®

Posted September 25, 2024

When it comes to preparing students for life outside of high school, **Joni Holifield** holds a decidedly unique idea about what students need for success.

It's a mistake to overlook vital skills like financial literacy, marketing, and technology in high school education, says Holifield, the founder and executive director of HeartSmiles, a Baltimore nonprofit that trains teens in entrepreneurship and business leadership. Holifield says classes in leadership and entrepreneurship belong in public schools.

Systemic barriers limit access to educational programs that enhance students' futures outside of curricula, and while internships exist, access to them is often limited, Holifield said. With heavy course loads, students sometimes don't even have the time to participate in internships.

"And we wonder why so many of us, especially young Black kids from underprivileged communities, either don't make it into a professional space or are limited to just minimum wage



AJC  
Opinion

OPINION

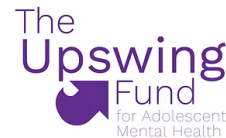
## Solutions: Providers, lawyers join to help patients stay in recovery - and housed

A partnership between a substance abuse treatment agency and a law firm is proving effective in helping people rebuild their lives.

By Shawna James and Kyndall Hubbard - Youthcast Media Group

Aug 21, 2023

# OUR FUNDERS



## FOUNDING SPONSOR



## SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS WITH A MONTHLY OR ONE-TIME DONATION!

DONATE HERE: <https://bit.ly/DonateYMG>



Platinum  
Transparency  
2025

Candid.

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