

Albert Met a Man Who Would Come Alongside



Albert Williams, left, hangs out at a summer barbecue at Alki Beach with Ed, an experienced mentor who's become a father figure to Albert

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By Alison Gazarek

Albert Williams might have been just another dropout. As a freshman he realized that if he made it through high school he would be the first male in his family to get a diploma.

"I had no role model I could look up to," he says. "I had a lot of anger...I was blamed for everything and had too much responsibility. I was talked about at school for my size and my shyness. After school I would sit at home and stare at walls."

When a CFY Program Manager came to Albert's history class to talk about the Steps Ahead mentoring program, he decided to give it a try. He wanted help to "go the right way in life, to be successful."

After the Launch Course, Albert was matched with a mentor who had been with the program for six years. At first he didn't want to open up to Ed but, as he began to risk, little by little Albert learned he could trust Ed.

Ed encouraged Albert to set goals, and dared him to do better in school. Ed soon became a sort of father figure to Albert. As part of a new community of students at the school, Albert found new friends who encouraged him in the hallways to continue to step out of his box of "shyness," and as he took those risks, he began to develop more and more confidence.

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"I had a lot of anger... After school I would sit at home and stare at walls."

Albert Williams

Rainier Beach grad

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Our Mission:

Community for Youth inspires and supports youth to identify and achieve their goals through mentoring, learning experiences, and participation in a powerful community.

A New Year—and a Bright Future

Dear Friends of Community for Youth,

It's so rewarding to watch our young people gain confidence, make thoughtful choices and achieve their goals. I look forward to all the lives that will be changed by being a part of our extraordinary programs this year.

Ten very proud seniors graduated last spring. Some are the first in their family to graduate from high school. Nine of the 10 are enrolled in two- or four-year colleges this year. The other is heading for a vocational program to pursue his interests.

The students have achieved remarkable goals. I've witnessed a student who, as a freshman, was petrified of standing in front of the community; two years later she addresses groups with confidence and self-assurance. Others who were on the verge of dropping out of high school have decided to stay because they recognized that to achieve their ideal future they would need an education.

It is so satisfying to see students who, with the support of our community, have dropped out of gangs, lost weight, earned higher grade point averages and improved relationships with their parent.

You have played a huge part in giving these students a future. Many of you provided us with a gift of money or resources, others of you have volunteered time, and given food or office supplies to support our programs and the students we serve. We thank you for your contributions.

We hope you will join us for the 4th Annual Wine Tasting Dinner & Auction on January 20th. Wineries from the Pacific Northwest will offer tastes of their wines. The talented and exciting African Drum & Dance Ensemble from Rainier Beach HS will entertain us and we'll enjoy a three course dinner and a live and silent auction. You'll hear from our students about the impact CfY has had on their lives. It's always a fun and festive evening.

If you have an interest in learning more about our programs or getting more involved in our work, please give us a call. We'd love to talk with you.

Thank you for your support and for being a part of this community.

Warm regards,

Margy Bresslour

Executive Director

You have played a huge part in giving these students a future

'All of a sudden people wanted to listen to me'

Continued from Page One

By his junior year, Albert was a completely different person. No longer holding anger inside, he was regularly meeting with his mentor, involved in football, tennis, and debate, and was a key member of the student leadership team "Steps Up" at Community for Youth. In Steps



Albert Williams is attending American Intercontinental University in Atlanta to study videogame design and play football on a scholarship.

Up, Albert was pushed to speak his mind and be honest about his life experiences in front of large, often restless, groups of new freshmen and mentors. He said, "I never thought I would be a leader because I was quiet, never thought anyone would listen to me. In Steps Up, all of a sudden people wanted to listen to what I had to say."

Near the end of his junior year, however, Albert's illusions of being at peace with his anger were shattered: His brother was shot and killed. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

As a major bearer of responsibility at home, Albert found himself trying to be strong for his family while negotiating his own feelings of rage and loss.

"It made me cold. I didn't expect that would happen when my brother was just turning his own life around, and spending more time with me, inspiring and encouraging me to be the first male in our family to finish high school and go on to college."

That was a tough year for Albert, but with the steadfast support of his mentor, his family, and the community of mentors and students who had come to see him as an indispensable older brother, he made it to his senior year.

As a senior, Albert played football full out and continued to engage in

internships and leadership experiences. As the lead Steps Up member, he coached and inspired younger students to become leaders to the freshmen, and had underclassmen approaching him daily to tell him what a great example he was to them.

No longer a shy, angry freshman, Albert had achieved the vision he had for himself four years before—that of a successful, powerful leader, a role model to other students. This spring Ed celebrated his tenth year as a Community for Youth mentor, and he was so proud to watch Albert walk across the stage and receive his diploma. Albert himself was thrilled, knowing that in just months he'd be leaving the state to accept a football scholarship to American InterContinental University in Atlanta and pursue a degree in Video Game Design.

"I was so shy. Now I love talking to people and helping them with their problems. It gave me confidence in myself to hear people say, 'Albert, I look up to you.'"

Well, Albert, we all look up to you.

eNewsletter

Would you like to receive our new eNewsletter? To be added to our list, please email info@communityforyouth.org with "eNewsletter" in the subject line. Hopefully you will find the periodic updates useful and inspiring!

Save the Date!
Fourth Annual
Wine Tasting
Dinner & Auction
 at the Bell Harbor
 International
 Conference Center
 Saturday,
January 20th, 2007
 6-9pm

Do you have an auction item to donate? Would your company consider sponsoring the event? Are you interested in being a table captain & enjoying the event with nine of your friends? Please contact Kim Burgess, (206) 325-8480 or kim@communityforyouth.org.

"CfY became my motivation and inspiration to expect more from myself and reach beyond my goal."

-CfY Student

"I've gained a community to be a part of, skills to use in my life, and satisfaction from contributing to the lives of the incredible students in this program."

-CfY Mentor

By the numbers

Results from evaluations given to students at the end of the year last year...

100% would recommend program to a friend

95.2% had a lot of fun

96% feel their mentor listens and supports them

96% say they have a good relationship with their mentor

94.6% "gained a whole lot"

94% talk with their mentor about important concerns

93.7% learned a lot

93% feel accepted in the community

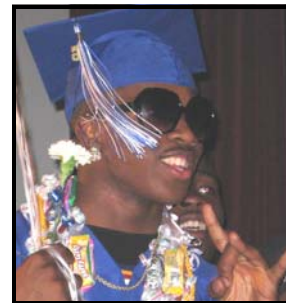
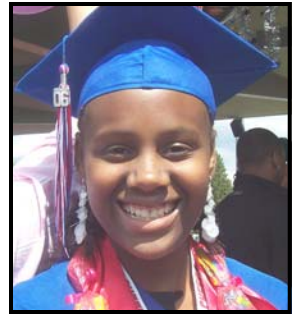
90.3% made lasting friendships

89% say relationship with a parent/guardian improved

86.2% fully achieved a goal

"CFY really changes your life if you "put in on," It changed mine."

Shantae Duckworth, studying restaurant management at South Seattle Community College



"CfY improved my relationships with my family members."

Almarco Winston is attending the YEP Electrician Apprenticeship Program.

"Steps Ahead and Steps Beyond helped me expand my views on people and the world."

ChaNelle Baines, studying nursing at Cornell College in Iowa



"The program helped me grow as a person"

Saba Abdillahi, attending North Seattle Community College to get her real-estate license.

"CFY gave me support and family."

Brandon Denton, who received a Gates Scholarship to attend Pacific Lutheran University

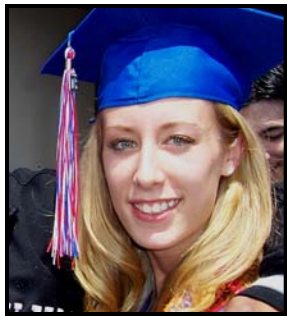


Student stats

In last year's programs...

70% qualified for the free or reduced lunch programs

78% Lived with a single parent or in foster care



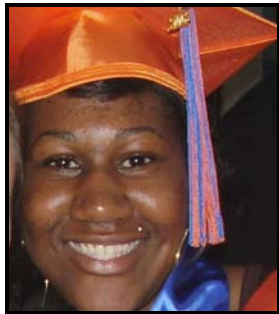
"CFY was a very positive influence in my life. It helped lead me in the right direction." Allie Niles is attending South Seattle Community College with plans to transfer to a university to get her teaching certificate.

Mentors say

In end-of-year evaluations...

98% "As a result of being a mentor, I have made positive changes in my own life."

98% the program is "very effective"



"Community for Youth helped me get along with others and gave me a community who cared about me and were on my side".

Meris Mitchell is attending community college for cosmetology.



"CFY helped me achieve my goals and gave me a sense of community as well as family".

Ashley Watson, who received a Gates Scholarship to attend Western Washington University.



"The program is a huge help but you have to want it to get the help."

Jeff Irons, attending Barber College and Business classes to open his own barber shop.



Being Extraordinary Figuring Out What is Most Important to you

By Colby Wilk, Program Director

What is it to have an extraordinary life? Who has one: Oprah, the Dali Lama, a guest from “The Rich and Famous”? How did they get there? And where do I get directions?

At Community for Youth we leverage youths’ desire for big houses, powerful jobs and fancy cloths to get them to take steps towards the future they want. And we do - we leverage their desire for better and their hope for the future to get them to attend classes, do homework and form a better relationship with their parents. We lead people towards satisfaction through achievement.

I have a history of achievement, but not satisfaction and certainly not joy. I would set a goal, achieve it and for a few moments experience happiness and then I would fall back into a state of anxiety of what to do next, frustrated that there had to be a next thing. I was repeatedly unsettled and unsettling to be with. Yes, I am a high achiever - but happiness lasted only a few moments - joy was a stranger.

My lack of satisfaction with achievement caused me to consider how I “was doing life”.
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Thank You! 2005-2006 Foundation Grants

- Washington Women’s Foundation
- Stuart Foundation
- Discuren Foundation
- Islands Fund
- Rudine Foundation
- Northwest Children’s Fund
- Just Cauz Foundation
- SOAR
- Hasbro Foundation
- Northwest Network
- The Glaser Foundation
- D.V. & Ida McEachern Charitable Trust
- Foster Foundation
- Bank of America
- Detlef Schrempf Foundation
- Qwest
- McCaw Trust Fund

Thank you Breakfast '06 Sponsors!

The Event was a success—brining in over \$35,000 for CfY Programs!



Get Involved: Ways to Volunteer

Be a Tutor

Tutors work with Community for Youth students in math, foreign language, English and other skills to reach their academic goals. Adult volunteers commit to a minimum of two hours a week (Monday-Thursdays, 2:30-4:30 pm) at Rainier Beach, Cleveland, and Chief Sealth high schools. No expertise or experience necessary. Tutors are trained and supervised.

Please contact

CfY at (206)325-8480

info@communityforyouth.org

For more information

www.communityforyouth.org

Office Support

Join us in our downtown office. We would welcome your help in:

- Data-entry, program evaluation and research.
- Call potential mentors and references.
- Design thank-you notes.

Fundraising Event Assistance

Support Community for Youth fundraising efforts in many different ways.

- Procure/prepare auction items
- Data-entry
- Create Decorations
- Day of Event Support
- Be a Table Captain

Recruit Your Friends

Do you know someone else who would benefit from volunteering? Do you belong to a community group where we might be able to do a presentation on our programs and need for volunteers?

Please help spread the word about the need for community involvement in supporting our city's most challenged youth!

Wish list



- Office Supplies: Photo paper, Printer Ink, large Post-It Boards, Name Tags, pens, paper
- Snacks for workshops and activities: granola bars, bottled water, other non-perishable goods or catering for a scheduled event
- Digital Camera
- Printers (4)
- Office Cabinet
- Portable presentation easels
- Sturdy, collapsible hand-truck

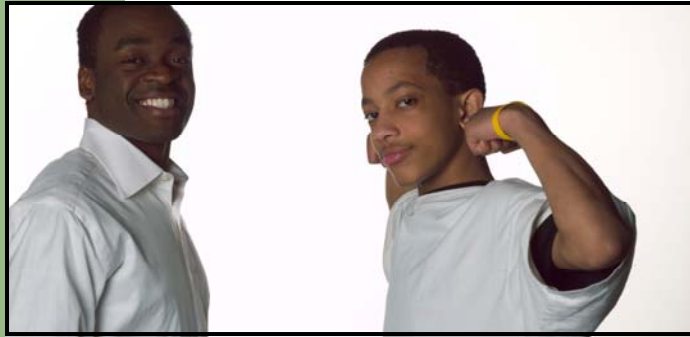
To donate please contact Kim Burgess at (206) 325-8480.

Thank you In Kind Donations!

Emmet Marshall II and the Mail-Advertising Bureau for unending service in printing and mailing, Gavin MacDougall for countless hours of website development and maintenance, Jonathan Mark for reliable and joyful technical support and gifts, Sara Stevens for her creative design and time in creating invitations, Sabra Hall for her

fantastic photos that are featured in this newsletter, Seattle Public Schools for office space at our three high schools, The

2100 Building for meeting space, Seattle Works, Jason Axley, Eastside Prep 7th Grade class, United Way of King County, Mike at Minute Man Press, Lowe's Hardware on Rainier Avenue S, Pike Place Fish Market, Bear Com for walkie talkies, Steve Boyd and Northwest Afternoon, Denise Kester at Starbucks, Don Jayne, DDS



Mentor Peter, and student Kedir, show what it is to be extraordinary!

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This year's Steps Beyond launch course compelled youth to consider their death and their life. In front of a casket, contemplating their own funeral, they shared what they hoped their parents, brothers, sisters, boyfriends and girlfriends would say about them. None mentioned something they had achieved; rather they were acknowledged for the way in which they went through life. Students and mentors identified how they act when they are most proud of themselves. They also became clear about what is most important to them.

Much suffering is caused by people not knowing what they want. They move from one thing to another, attempting to satisfy themselves and others, never taking time to really consider how they want to go through life. They try to hit upon satisfaction by accident, rather than sitting with themselves and really considering what is most important to them. What if you were thrilled to be alive? What if you moved to affirming life, not just, "I am here, might as well make the best of it."

I have come to the conclusion that what is most important to me is truth. For other people it might be wisdom, love, faith, but for me truth is it: saying what is so, experiencing the truth of the moment, the truth in relationships, and the truth of my own divinity. Truth to me gives me access to all the rest: love, wisdom, etc. Knowing this I know what to go for in life - truth.

Take some time today to sit with yourself and consider what is most important to you? What are you willing to stand for? What is the truest expression of you?

'What if you were thrilled to be alive? What if you moved to affirming life?... What are you willing to stand for?'

THANK YOU!



For mailing the newsletters and invitations!

COMMUNITY
FOR YOUTH

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