


Welcome Back to The Core!



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Welcome back to *The Core*, your monthly CYC newsletter! We proudly share our latest news, stories, and events showcasing how our CYC Fellows, staff, volunteers, and supporters embody our core values.



Help Us Reach Our Goal of 100 Mentor's by March 12th!

🎉 We've passed the 50-day mark of our 100 Heroes in 100 Days campaign and already have 35 incredible mentors on board, ready to guide our senior Fellows (Class of 2026). With your help, we're aiming to reach 100 mentors by March 12th! 🎉

Mentorship is a powerful way to give back, create opportunities, and make a lasting impact on the next generation of leaders.

Are you ready to inspire and support tomorrow's change makers?

🌟 Join us and make a difference — sign up to become a mentor today!

👉 Visit <https://www.carolinayouth.org/join-us> to learn more and get involved.

Mentor with CYC





SPRING ORIENTATION 2025

This month, Carolina Youth Coalition proudly welcomed 56 new Fellows during Spring orientation! Hosted at CYC's East and Southwest campuses, the orientation gave new Fellows and their families an exciting preview of the year ahead. Highlights included academic and professional development workshops, college tours, exclusive scholarship opportunities, and more. Fellows and their families also had the chance to connect one-on-one with program directors, receiving personalized insights and support to start the year off strong.

In addition to learning about programs and opportunities at CYC, Fellows were treated to swag bags filled with fun goodies. Many also had the chance to enter a raffle for tickets to an exclusive Charlotte Hornets game day experience—an exciting perk that added even more energy to the day!

We're proud to now serve 320 Torch Fellows and can't wait to see all the amazing opportunities that await them!





CLASS OF 2025: SENIOR SHOUTOUTS

We are beyond excited to celebrate the amazing progress of CYC's Class of 2025!

These exceptional Fellows are truly breaking barriers, with 363 college applications submitted and an impressive 340 of those returning as college acceptances. Along with their college acceptances, our Fellows have been making great progress with scholarship applications and awards, further setting them up for success in the next chapter of their academic journeys.

Please join us in celebrating the following senior Fellows and the accomplishments they have made this month:

- **Abel Acheampong:** Brighthouse Scholar Connections Scholarship Recipient
- **Allison Schenkweiler:** Earned acceptance into Wake Forest University
- **Brya Wilson:** North Carolina Central University Soaring Eagle Scholarship Recipient
- **Caleb Joel:** Advanced to Round 3 of the Greenhouse Scholars Program
- **Chris Romero:** Earned acceptance into the University of Miami
- **Ja'Moni BellMurphy:** Earned acceptance into Spelman College
- **Tia Fullwood:** Earned acceptance into UNC-Greensboro's Lloyd International Honors College
- **Thomas Mesfen:** Advanced to Round 3 of the Greenhouse Scholars Program
- **Vance Johnson:** Handshake for America Scholarship Recipient
- **Vir Shah:** Earned acceptance into UNC-Chapel Hill

We're extremely proud of these incredible achievements and can't wait to see which college our Fellows choose to attend at this year's [Torch Awards!](#)



CYC FELLOWS RECOGNIZED AT 2024 JUMPMAN INVINTATIONAL

During the 2024 Jordan Wings Design Program, sixteen CYC Fellows took part in a four-week creative experience focused on refining their design skills. Working alongside peers from Rise2Impact (R2I), they collaborated to explore the fundamentals of design, color theory, and the art of storytelling.

Throughout the program, each group of students had the chance to create show-stopping T-shirts (pictured), which were unveiled at the highly anticipated 2024 Jumpman Invitational. Over the two-day event, Spectrum Center staff and college basketball fans received these exclusive shirts. This year's theme paid homage to the Queen City while honoring the legacy of Michael Jordan. Each shirt featured unique design elements, including the quote "Make It Happen," the Mecklenburg Crown, and basketball motifs.

A huge thank you to this year's exceptional Design Program judges—[James Whitner](#),

[Cameryn Rutlin](#), and [Melissa Carnegie](#) for making this experience unforgettable.

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to the following organizations for making this program possible: Jordan Brand, Truist, Triple Threat Mentoring, and the Charlotte Sports Foundation, whose unwavering support, mentorship, and commitment to nurturing the next generation of creative talent have been invaluable. A special thank you to Social Status for hosting each design lab workshop in their inspiring beSOCIAL venue.

Watch a recap of the Jordan Wings Design Program [here](#).



CYC STAFF EXPANDS SOCIAL CAPITAL EFFORTS

Carolina Youth Coalition has been empowering its team through monthly staff meetings focused on building social capital, a key element for fostering strong community connections. In partnership with Synergy Emerge, CYC staff participated in an engaging learning experience aimed at enhancing their ability to generate, leverage, and sustain social capital.

Each session covered important topics including the principles of social capital, strategies for leveraging networks, and the significance of recognizing CYC Fellows as essential contributors to community and social development. Participants engaged in various hands-on activities, including group discussions, partner exercises, and assessing their personal networks and resources.

A sincere thank you to [George Metz](#) for leading and sharing valuable insights during each session. CYC looks forward to continued growth and exploring new ways to build social capital within our network and throughout the greater Charlotte community.



EMPOWERMENT

CHOOSE TO BE POWERFUL



Torch Fellow Spotlight: Joseph Bessada

Joseph Bessada, a senior Fellow at CYC and a member of the Cato Middle College Class of 2025, has been selected as a semifinalist for the prestigious Park Scholarship at North Carolina State University. Keep up the outstanding work, Joseph! Click on the picture to connect with Joseph and learn more about his journey.



College Fellow Spotlight: Meliah Bell

Meliah Bell, a sophomore at Howard University, will be joining PwC's Cloud & Digital Consulting team as a Summer 2025 intern. During her internship, Meliah will work with consultants to explore digital transformation and help clients solve challenges with innovative technology solutions. Click on the picture to connect with Meliah and learn more about her journey.



Alumni Fellow Spotlight: Gloria Nzuzi

Gloria Nzuzi, a UNC-Chapel Hill alumna and former Goodwin Meisner Alumni Fellow, has been accepted into Campbell University's Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program! Click on the picture to connect with Gloria and learn more about her journey.

#EVERYDREAMNEEDSATEAM



HAPPY NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH FROM CYC

At Carolina Youth Coalition, our mentors play a key role in helping Fellows build confidence, develop essential life skills, and establish positive habits that set them up for success. By guiding students to take charge of their futures, they empower them to recognize and make the most of the opportunities and resources available.

Through our EmpowerMentors and CAPS Mentors, students gain not only practical advice but also the confidence to navigate their unique paths. One-on-one mentoring provides personalized guidance that encourages growth, whether it's working through the college admissions process or considering long-term career goals.

Beyond one-on-one support, CYC group mentors create spaces where students can learn

from each other and grow together. These conversations help Fellows refine important life skills, build stronger self-advocacy, and foster a growth mindset—tools that are crucial for success both in school and beyond.

We are incredibly grateful for all of the mentors who dedicate their time and commitment to helping our students dream big and achieve their goals. Thank you for making a lasting impact on the lives of CYC Fellows!

Happy National Mentoring Month!



Jaela Agee '20/'24
Editor-in-Chief



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