

🏆 It's been an A-MAY-zing Month: Scholarships, Awards, Graduations, and More!



From Carolina Youth Coalition <admin@carolinayouth.org>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To Carolina Youth Coalition <admin@carolinayouth.org>
Date 2025-05-30 10:00



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.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE COLLEGE CLASS OF 2025!

CYC's Class of 2021/2025 are officially college graduates and proud Alumni Fellows!

Since 2018, 98% of our College and Alumni Fellows have remained enrolled or have completed a degree program. Among them, 23 Fellows from the Class of 2021/2025 have successfully earned their undergraduate degrees. Now, they are launching careers and continuing their education at top companies and programs like IBM, Microsoft, Pfizer, UNC Chapel Hill, and more.

Check out some of the exciting places and roles they're headed into next:

- IBM: Brand Sales Specialist
- Abbott: Clinical Specialist in Electrophysiology
- Bank of America: Officer Software Engineer
- RVO Health: Software Engineer
- Microsoft: Cloud Architect
- Pfizer: Global Marketing Associate
- UNC Chapel Hill: Master of Accounting

We're incredibly proud of our Alumni Fellows and look forward to seeing and supporting their next chapters!



3-year mentor Shari Schwarzwald with her new mentee, Anais Lutantu, a CYC Senior Fellow.

CYC MATCHES CLASS OF 2026 WITH EMPOWERMENTORS!

We're thrilled to share exciting updates from our *100 Heroes in 100 Days* mentor recruitment campaign! With your support, we reached some significant milestones and built momentum that will carry the Class of 2026 into a strong senior year.

Campaign Highlights:

- **98 out of 100 mentors recruited!**
A total of 98 mentors have committed to walking alongside a rising high school senior for the 2025-2026 school year. These mentors will play a vital role in helping their mentee navigate and celebrate the college application process.
- **More mentors than ever returned for a second or third year.**
This year, we welcomed the highest percentage of returning mentors in CYC history. Many stepped up to serve for a second or third year, a powerful reminder of the lasting impact these relationships create.
- **We kicked off our May Mentor Match session this week.**
Mentors and Fellows met for the first time, and the energy in the room was incredible. Lots of good conversations, smiles, and the start of many meaningful connections.

You helped make this happen. Whether you shared a post, sent an email, or connected us with someone in your network, THANK YOU! Your outreach helped us grow our volunteer network in a big way.





SENIOR FELLOW KALKIDAN (KALI) ADHANOM SCORES JORDAN WINGS SCHOLARSHIP!

We're excited to announce Kali Adhanom as this years Jordan Wings Scholarship recipient! Since 2018, Carolina Youth Coalition has proudly partnered with the Jordan Wings Scholarship Program. To date, eight of our Fellows have been awarded this life-changing opportunity.

The Wings Scholars Program provides access to educational opportunities for under-resourced youth, enabling young people to achieve greatness. As a Wings Scholar, Kali has earned a full-ride scholarship and the opportunity to pursue higher education at the institution of her choice. In celebration of the Wings Program's 10th anniversary, we are proud to recognize Kali's achievement as she embarks on her educational journey at North Carolina A&T State University this fall.

Thank you Jordan Wings for your continued support and believing that Everyone Can Fly!

[Check out the surprise video on our Instagram!](#)



As a proud member of the Crescent Coalition, CYC had the honor of hosting the 2025 Equitable Excellence Scholarship Celebration at our Southwest Campus.

The celebration honored 18 outstanding students from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, including 15 CYC Senior Fellows. Each student earned a \$20,000 scholarship and a new iPad to support their academic journey. As part of the program, each scholarship recipient had the opportunity to recognize an educator who made a meaningful impact on their path. These educators were awarded a \$500 gift card, courtesy of Equitable Foundation.

A special thank you to [Jarian Kerekes](#), [Dheepa Johnston](#), and the entire Equitable Foundation team for your continued support and investment in students across the Charlotte community.

[Check out more fun photos from the celebration on our LinkedIn!](#)





CYC'S DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE ACCESS HONORED WITH WOMEN'S IMPACT FUND SPARK AWARD!

We're proud to celebrate our Director of College Access, LaShawn Robertson, who has earned the 2025 Spark Award presented by Women's Impact Fund (WIF)! Each year, WIF recognizes and celebrates 10 exceptional women leaders who are driving transformational change across Mecklenburg County. Each Spark Award honoree receives a \$5,000 unrestricted award in recognition of their outstanding work.

Out of 80 nominations this year, LaShawn was selected as one of 10 awardees—a powerful reflection of her deep commitment to youth development and community impact.

[Learn more about Lashawn's incredible work and this prestigious honor here.](#)



80+ FAMILIES AND FELLOWS ATTEND CYC'S FIRST SOPHOMORE SUMMIT!

CYC hosted its first Sophomore Summit at both its East and Southwest campuses, celebrating the end of the year with enthusiasm and purpose! The event provided Fellows with a meaningful experience that highlighted their growth and learning throughout the year. Fellows engaged in various challenges and puzzles that strengthened key college readiness skills and fostered teamwork and community, while also having the

chance to share their brag sheets, self-assessments, goals, and overall progress with their families and CYC staff, setting the stage for a successful junior year.

"CYC is truly a blessing. I'm so grateful that my granddaughter can be a part of a program that my daughter—and no one else in our family—had the opportunity to experience while growing up." - CYC Southwest Family Member

The event culminated with delicious food, smiles, and heartfelt farewells as Fellows completed their final day of sophomore program. We can't wait to welcome them back in the fall as Junior Fellows and witness their growth!

EMPOWERMENT

CHOOSE TO BE POWERFUL



Torch Fellow Spotlight: Jersu Yates
Jersu Yates, a senior at Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences, has earned the Hawks Battalion Principal Award! She shares, "I'm grateful for the recognition and proud to be part of a program that builds leadership, discipline, and civic engagement—qualities I've developed over the past three years in JROTC." Click on the picture to connect with Jersu and learn more about her journey!



College Fellow Spotlight: Musie Tilahun
Musie Tilahun, a rising sophomore at UNC Charlotte, has earned a summer internship at Brighthouse Financial! He is currently studying Computer Science with a focus on developing innovative solutions through technology. Click on the picture to connect with Musie and learn more about his journey!



Alumni Fellow Spotlight: Zadok Adua
Zadok Adua, a recent graduate of UNC Charlotte, earned his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science with a focus on Cybersecurity! After completing his internship in AI and Automation, Zadok has accepted a full-time position at PDM US. Click on the picture to connect with Zadok and learn more about his journey!

#EVERYDREAMNEEDSATEAM





THANK YOU TO OUR YP BOARD FOR AN INCREDIBLE 2024-2025 YEAR!

We're grateful for our Young Professionals Auxiliary Board, a group of 18 appointed board members who dedicate their time to supporting, connecting, and expanding engagement between young professionals in the Charlotte business community and CYC.

This year, the YP board brought fresh energy and ideas that supported CYC's mission through fundraising, mentorship, and strategic outreach. They successfully launched and hosted our first-ever Paddles for a Purpose Pickleball Tournament, raising over **\$18,000** in support of CYC programming.

A heartfelt thank you to every member of the YP Board for your service and a special shoutout to our Chair Randell Nairn and Vice Chair Mantreasa Gelinas for your incredible leadership this year. We're excited for what's ahead!

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



*Copyright © *Carolina Youth Coalition, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).