



Since 1999, YES has brought nearly 5,000 youth and an additional 1,000 families from low-income Richmond to Summer and Family Camps located in pristine redwood settings across Northern California. Together with camp experiences, YES offers participants year-round programming focused on leadership development and wellness promotion in schools and neighborhoods.

YES serves youth, adults and families living in Richmond and surrounding West Contra Costa County. One hundred percent of participants are low-income and a majority live in neighborhoods in Central and North Richmond. Many have been affected by harsh environmental and neighborhood conditions that can result in learning loss and deep traumas when not addressed. Participants include youth and families referred from schools, community partners, homeless shelters, and foster homes.

YES recently passed a physical activity, healthy beverage, and healthy food policy. The staff understands they are role models for their participants and has committed to improving health conditions in the office. YES is doing this in several ways: increasing physical activity by having walking meetings and stretch breaks, making sure that everyone has access to free, safe, drinking water, and offering healthy food options at events.

This policy has made their meetings more fun by encouraging them to stand up and move their bodies. YES is blessed to have a park across the street from the office allowing them to have more walking meetings. The policy is also a good way for the staff to talk to community partners about the food and drinks that are being served at events that participants attend. Staff has gotten really good at making delicious fruit infused waters!

A lesson learned is that they were already doing a pretty good job as a staff team at modeling healthy behaviors. "We didn't have soda or snack machines and most of our staff drink water and tea more than anything. When we serve food to participants, we try to shop for fresh, local produce and use healthy recipes. It felt good to put some of our life choices on paper to help us keep each other accountable."

YES Peer Advocate: "You guys are really going to get me in shape with all these walking meetings!"

