It's the end of another year at Youth and Family Enrichment Services (YoFES)!

Back in January, no one could have predicted that 2020 would turn out like this. Navigating everyday life during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging, to say the least. As a community, we've dealt with everything from illness, anxiety, physical isolation, income and housing insecurity, and remote learning, to the heartbreaking loss of family and friends. After all that, it's understandable that many of us might be having trouble feeling as "merry and bright" as we typically do this time of year.

And yet, even at its worst, 2020 gave YoFES so many beautiful silver linings.

Best of all, they came from all of YOU ~ our families, supporters, donors, community partners, staff, board of directors... the list goes on! Thank you so much for your strength, courage, determination, and most of all, for your support of our organization and its mission. Without you, we could not do what we do.

Happiest of Holidays, from YoFES to you!

YoFES 2020: A Year in Review

COVID-19 Resource Page

After a complete website overhaul early this spring, YoFES created the COVID-19 Updates & Resources page in hopes of providing a centralized, multilingual, and
accessible information hub specialized for Greater Boston residents.

The page provides general COVID-19 information (CDC, WHO, City of Boston), information for Boston residents and families, and relief resources for Boston-based artists and small business owners. Since its inception in April 2020, the COVID-19 Updates & Resources page has provided over 60 helpful links designed to help our communities navigate the pandemic.

Take Me There!

**COVID-19 Response Initiative: Free Mask Giveaway**

During the recent summer and fall seasons, YoFES gave away nearly 3,500 3-packs of PPE-grade masks to businesses, schools, families, and other members of the Hyde Park and Mattapan communities. YoFES's goal is to distribute 5,000 masks by summer 2021, so mask distribution will continue into the new year.

Learn More

**Open Access to Music Education for Children**

We are proud to report that OAMEC, YoFES's flagship youth program, provided access to affordable lessons in violin, cello, piano, voice, and guitar throughout the entirety of 2020. This was made possible in a large part through our partnership with New England Conservatory's office of Community Performances & Partnerships (CPP). During the months of April, May and June 2020, CPP fellows joined forces with YoFES to provide private virtual music lessons to each of our families completely free of charge.

YoFES's continued partnership with CPP this fall has helped us provide scholarship and financial aid to a greater number of families, therefore allowing the OAMEC program to remain truly “open access” during the pandemic. Huge thanks to CPP's Grace Allendorf and Tanya Maggi for their support!

Click to see OAMEC students in action!

**Give the gift of music! An $80 donation sponsors a student's music education at YoFES for a full month!**

Donate Today!

**Youth Builders Summer Camp**

This year, YoFES held the first ever virtual Youth Builders Summer (YBS) Camp! The five-week program provided campers with a crash course in general music, voice, dance, theatre, and "virtual adventure" of science and history.

Click to watch a camp performance!
Youth Builders After School (YBAS) Program

The YBAS tutoring program is back and going strong this fall! Our highly accomplished YBAS tutors provide virtual, one-on-one academic support 4 afternoons per week. Instruction focuses on Math, English Language Arts, and Reading and is available in Haitian Creole.

Thank you to Canner Family Trust, a YoFES supporter and sponsor, for contributing so much this year to our efforts to provide affordable, quality summer and after school programming to Boston Youth!

Learn More

Help keep our youth programs strong!

Virtual YoFestival 2020

YoFestival is an annual large scale fundraising concert held by YoFES in honor of Haitian Heritage Month (May) and Haitian Mother’s Day. The event normally held in spaces such as The Strand Theatre in Dorchester, but due to the pandemic, this year’s YoFestival was completely virtual. On May 31st, a concert-length video was released on the YoFES website. A shortened version also aired on Boston Neighborhood Network News (BNN).

YoFestival 2020 features current and past performances from YoFES music students and staff, 3 headlining Haitian-American musicians, words from community leaders, and a tribute to essential workers from the community.

Watch YoFestival!

Virtual Parent Education Program

This year, YoFES partnered with Haitian American Public Health Initiatives (HAPHI) & Boston Public Schools to support 15 Haitian parents/families in the first ever cohort of the Haitian Creole Parent Education Program. The program is designed to provide information to parents regarding BPS weekly updates, CDC health updates, and local city and state updates, and Covid-19 safety protocols by medical professionals. All instruction and class materials are presented in Haitian Creole. Classes for the program’s second cohort will begin on January 17, 2021 and run for 6 weeks.

For more information about our Haitian Creole Parent Education Program please email the YoFES Executive Director at metienne-campbell@yofes.org.

Project SMART (HIV/STI Education program)

This summer, in partnership with the Multicultural Aids Coalition, YoFES's Project SMART distributed over 300 units of PPE to members of the Mattapan and Dorchester communities.

HIV/STI education is slated to resume this spring! If you’re interested in participating in our Safety Net Parties or hosting a safe sex education gathering, send us an email at metienne-campbell@yofes.org.

Donate
There is still so much work left to be done and we need your support! Please consider making a donation today to help us reach even more families and children in 2021!

Donate

Special Thanks

YoFES 2020 Staff

Mishella Etienne-Campbell - Executive Director
Akela Franklin - Executive Assistant, OAMEC Voice Instructor, YBS Camp Manager

Dr. Guy Apollon - Project SMART Coordinator
Leo Balkovetz - YBS Camp Instructor
Kevin Covney - OAMEC Guitar Instructor
Erez Dessel - OAMEC Piano Instructor
Rayna DeYoung - OAMEC Piano Instructor
Jordan Eade - YBS Camp Instructor, YBAS tutor, OAMEC Voice Instructor
Mohandra Eugene - YBAS Tutor
Shallen James - YBS Camp Instructor
Lucy Little - OAMEC Violin Instructor
Samantha Lucien - Intern
Gabrielle Nunes - YBAS Tutor
Marie Nunes - YBS Camp Instructor, YBAS Tutor
Hannah Price - OAMEC Violin Instructor
Yi-Mei Templeman - OAMEC Cello Instructor
Marie Caelle Vincent - YBAS Tutor, Admin support

YoFES Board of Directors

In Loving Memory

Dr. Gabrielle Bercy-Roberson, M.D.
Parent, Physician, Board Member, Friend

This year YoFES mourns the loss of one of its greatest supporters, Dr. Gabriel Bercy-Roberson. Dr. Bercy-Roberson believed in the power of music and how it could elevate children who needed it most. Because of her passion for children and her love for music, hundreds of Haitian Youth and Families benefited from her generosity over the past 17 years at YoFES. YoFES board and staff will miss her in her role as parent, advisor, and board member. May her memory be a blessing and may she rest in peace.