

**YOUTH COMMUNICATION**

*Spring  
Benefit*

**May 30, 2024**



# ABOUT *Youth Communication*

**OUR MISSION IS TO ELEVATE TEEN VOICES  
TO CREATE REAL CHANGE.**

**Through the power of true stories, written by youth who have been systemically marginalized, we create more supportive and successful learning communities.**

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## **WE BELIEVE**

**Young people often know exactly what they need.**  
Adults just need the tools to listen.

**Real stories can create real change.**  
Youth Communication elevates youth voices to create that change.

**Our young people are not being supported to succeed.**  
Our institutions—schools, after-school programs, child welfare and juvenile justice systems—are struggling to engage and support our kids. Our stories provide staff with the tools they need to understand and meet their young people's needs.

**The experts are already in the room.**  
Our education partners have the opportunity to be an influential and affirming adult in a young person's life. We give them the youth perspective and expertise they need to do so.





# TONIGHT

## *Our Schedule*

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**6:00-7:00 PM – COCKTAIL RECEPTION**

**7:00-8:30 PM – DINNER & AWARDS CELEBRATION**

**Welcome, YC Executive Director**

**YC Writer and Alumni Panel**

**Orubba Almansouri, Rising Star Award**

**Cypress Hills LDC, Education Partner Award**

**Edwidge Danticat, Distinguished Alumni Award**

**Paddle Raise to Support YC**

**Closing Remarks**

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*Thank you for  
joining us!*

# AWARD

## *Distinguished Alumni*



### EDWIDGE DANTICAT

Acclaimed writer and MacArthur Fellowship winner, Edwidge Danticat began her writing career at Youth Communication in 1984 as a 14-year-old writer. In 1987 she wrote a powerful account of her immigration experience from Haiti, “A New World Full of Strangers.” Much later, she wrote an introduction to *Starting with I*, a Youth Communication anthology of personal essays by teens. In this introduction she credits Youth Communication for providing the space from which she would embark on her writing career.

Edwidge said, “At 14 I was asked by Youth Communication to write about my experience as a new immigrant for their publication YCTeen...my public writing career began. When I was done with the [immigration] piece, I felt that my story was unfinished, so I wrote a short story, which later became a book, my first novel: *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. . . Writing for Youth Communication had given me a voice. My silence was destroyed completely, indefinitely.”

Edwidge is a graduate of Barnard College and holds an MFA from Brown University. Today, she teaches at Columbia University and continues as an acclaimed and prolific writer of novels, nonfiction, and books for young adults. Her second book, *Krik? Krak!*, was a finalist for a National Book Award, as was her investigation into the death of her uncle in Miami’s immigration jail, *Brother, I’m Dying*. Her first book, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, was an Oprah’s Book Club selection.

She is a 2009 MacArthur fellow, a 2018 Ford Foundation “Art of Change” fellow, a United States Artists Fellow, a two-time winner of The Story Prize, the winner of the 2018 Neustadt International Prize, the 2019 St. Louis Literary Award, and the 2020 Vilcek Prize for Literature.



# AWARD

## *Rising Star*



### **ORUBBA ALMANSOURI**

One of Orubba's stories as a teen writer at Youth Communication was "University of Kitchen?." This story was a plea to her father to break Yemeni tradition and allow her to attend college. She was able to write that story because of her work with her highly skilled editor here at Youth Communication.

Orubba's father did agree; she eventually graduated as salutatorian of City College and gave a commencement speech. The impact rippled outward as more than a dozen of her girl cousins followed her example and earned high school or college degrees. After the commencement ceremony, Orubba was invited by the former First Lady, Michele Obama, to speak at the United State of Women Summit at the White House, on the "Let Girls Learn" Panel.

Orubba said once, "A simple conversation has the power to change the mind." On May 30th, we celebrate her work elevating and promoting immigrant youth voices in NYC.

Orubba is a doctoral candidate in Urban Education at the CUNY Graduate Center. She holds an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from NYU. She is an author, educator and researcher. Her interdisciplinary research experience, and her experience as a language learner and immigrant youth prepared her to work as an educator across disciplines with students from various cultural, linguistic, and academic styles.

As a researcher and educator Orubba's work explores cultures of care in school settings that are co-created by the community members including its students. Her recent book chapter focuses on the experience of schooling for Yemeni Youth. She holds the Provost Enhancement Fellowship from the CUNY Graduate Center and has held multiple fellowship awards including the FLAS Fellowship from NYU and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship.

Through her work, Orubba aims to push forward the importance of multicultural education in transforming academia into an environment where immigrant students are able to connect and thrive in the world that revolves around them. She is currently teaching at Barnard College at Columbia University and at Baruch College.

# AWARD

## *Education Partner*



### **CYPRESS HILLS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Youth Communication (YC) and Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) have worked together since the 1980's. For more than 25 years, CHLDC's youth participants improved their literacy skills by reading YC's print magazines - which center youth stories and voices.

The partnership grew in 2017 as YC began training CHLDC's staff to use YC's social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula to create supportive learning environments that strengthen social and academic skills. Staff currently use YC's stories and lessons across CHLDC's 11 middle school sites. CHLDC have also collaborated to create youth-run community improvement projects based on YC's stories.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation serves more than 200,000 residents from the neighborhoods of East New York, Cypress Hills, City Line, Starrett City and Spring Creek. CHLDC offers programs in: career & education, college success, community development, youth & family services, community organizing and housing counseling.

YC deeply appreciates CHLDC's commitment to making youth voice a centerpiece of its youth development efforts and looks forward to continuing this partnership.



# TONIGHT

## *Panelists & Emcees*



### **LOURDES ROSADO**

**Moderator, YC Alumna + Board Member**

Lourdes is a YC alumna who helped start the organization in 1980. She is currently the vice president of YC's Board of Directors and President & General Counsel of LatinoJustice PRLDEF. Lourdes is a long-standing youth and social justice advocate. She is a graduate of Swarthmore College, holds an M.A. from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, a J.D. from NYU's School of Law, and a L.L.M. from Georgetown University Law Center.

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### **ATL CASTRO-ASMUSSEN**

**Panelist, YC Alumnus**

YC alumnus from 2017-2020, Atl graduated from Yale University in May 2024 with a bachelors degree in political science and government.



### **YOUSEF EL EMARY**

**PANELIST, YC ALUMNUS**

YC alumnus from 2016, Yousef received his BS with a double concentration in finance and sustainable business from NYU. Currently, Yousef is a wealth management analyst at Citi.



### **HANDE ERKAN**

**PANELIST, YC ALUMNA**

YC alumna from 2015, Hande graduated from Baruch College in 2022 where she studied business administration, marketing and communications, and journalism. Currently, Hande volunteers with New York Women in Communications.

# TONIGHT

## *Panelists & Emcees*



**ERICKA FRANCOIS**  
PANELIST, YC ALUMNA

YC alumna from 2015, Ericka has been a foster care advocate for seven years, helping Fair Futures make NYC the first city to publicly support foster care youth up to age 26. Currently, Ericka is the communications coordinator for The Center for the Study of Social Policy.



**ENOCH NAKLEN**  
EMCEE, YC ALUMNUS

YC alumnus from 2019-2021, Enoch wrote six stories for YCTeen which include topics about racism and writing as a form of activism. He is currently a sophomore at Baruch College studying journalism.



**GABRIELLE PASCAL**  
EMCEE, YC ALUMNA

YC alumnus from 2017-2020, Gabrielle graduated from Hofstra University with a B.A. in English and is currently finishing a M.F.A. in Fiction at The New School. In addition to writing, Gabrielle tells stories through documentary photography.



**ROSE PERNA**  
PANELIST, YC TEEN WRITER

A current YC writer, Rose just published her first story for YCTeen about navigating housing instability, and how caring relationships and a new home drastically improved her life.

*Thank You to our Panelists and Emcees!*



*A Big  
Youth Communication  
Thank You to our  
sponsors & supporters!*

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THANK YOU to the YC Board of Directors, staff,  
Benefit Host Committee and YC Ambassadors Host  
Committee for your energy and enthusiasm planning  
this event.

**BENEFIT HOST COMMITTEE**

Anonymous – Diana Autin & Keith Hefner  
Arlen Benjamin-Gomez & Danny Jiminian – The Blair Family  
Pilar Conde – Maris & Paul Feinstein – Henry & Jason Guttilla  
Barbara Haws & William Josephson  
Susan Hirschhorn & Arthur Klebanoff – Jen & Steve Kasoff  
Min Jin Lee & Chris Duffy – Nina Link – The Louie Family  
Bis Mekbeb – Leah Modigliani & Nicky McGrane  
Bob Ouimette – Lourdes Rosado & Jan Boswinkel  
The Donna & Marvin Schwartz Family Foundation  
Ursula & Buzz Tenny – Amira & Troy Williams

**YC AMBASSADORS HOST COMMITTEE**

Elena Autin-Hefner – Atl Castro-Asmussen  
Yousef El Emary – Hande Erkan – Ericka François  
Davide Lanuto – Mychal Pagan – Dytajah Watkins

# Thank You to Our Benefit Host Committee

## **VISIONARY \$25,000+**

Bob Ouimette

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Anonymous

Jen & Steve Kasoff

Leah Modigliani & Nicky McGrane

## **YOUTH CHAMPION \$5,000+**

Barbara Haws & William Josephson

Nina Link

Mika Minots

The Donna & Marvin Schwartz Foundation

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Diana Autin & Keith Hefner

Arlen Benjamin-Gomez & Danny Jiminian

Ana Bermúdez

The Blair Family

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Susan Hirschhorn & Arthur Klebanoff

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Ursula & Buzz Tenny

# Thank You

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Mary Rowe

Benita Sakin

Patrice Tanaka

Claudia Zeldin

## **FRIENDS UP TO \$499**

Anonymous

Michael Arsham

Aicha Balla

Yaridania Betancourt

Nancy & Stuart Braman

Ellen Breslow Newhouse

Atl Castro-Asmussen



*Congratulations!*



CONGRATULATIONS TO TONIGHT'S  
HONOREES AND TO YOUTH  
COMMUNICATION FOR 44 YEARS OF  
OFFERING TEENS THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
SHARE THEIR VOICES.

*Bob, David and Michael Quimette*



# Thank You

Youth Communication's programs help thousands of teens see themselves, find agency and engage with their communities and schools. We aim to keep kids grounded, connected, in school and graduating. We are so proud to work with teachers, probation officers, social workers and others working with kids that are farthest from opportunity.

We are so grateful for your support!  
Tonight we celebrate this work and say...

THANK YOU.



**Leah Modigliani**  
**YC Board President**

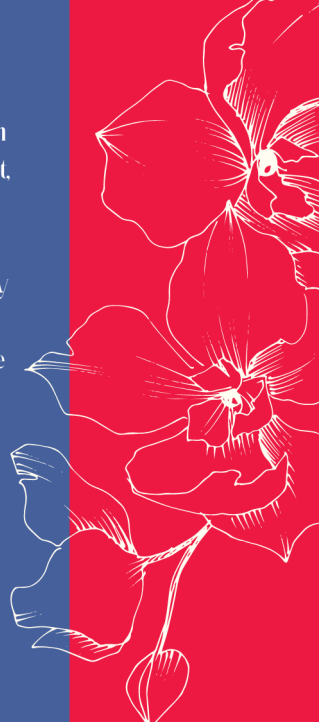


As a writer and publisher of children's books and magazines, I was drawn to the mission of Youth Communication. The power of the stories, unique in their authenticity and wide-ranging in their content, persuaded me to join the Board of Directors.

Storytelling that empowers others to tell their story elevates one voice into a chorus. YC encourages youth, teachers, and caring adults to talk about the stories, to learn from them, and even encourage some to write their own.

Recognizing that you are not alone through the words of another is a first step toward finding your voice.

Nina Link, YC Board Member



**Youth Communication's impact begins with the teenagers who participate in their rich writing programs—but it doesn't end there. The uniquely authentic, true stories written by the teens then touch and transform the lives of education professionals who use Youth Comm's story-based, social and emotional learning curriculum and culturally responsive teacher training. These are stories of growth and learning, of courage and of facing down discrimination and bias while exploring identity, and much more.**

**Congratulations on 44 years of elevating youth voice and THANK YOU to all who support this work!**

*Arlen Benjamin-Gomez, YC Board Member*

To my mother that always stressed the importance of education from an early age and to all those that have poured their heart and soul into this wonderful organization.

-THE BLAIR FAMILY

***Arthur Klebanoff  
congratulates the Youth  
Communication  
community***



**RODIN  
BOOKS®**





# *Wishes from Other Supporters*

“What YC Means to Me: I have had the honor of serving on the board of Youth Communication since 2020. During these tough years of crisis, isolation, and racial reckoning, YC served as a key anchor for young people in New York City, reminding me of why we do this work.

YC provides teens with the opportunity to make sense of their worlds, what these worlds are like right now, and what they could be in the future.”

*Vivian Louie, Former YC Associate Editor & Current Board Member*

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“Youth Communication has been an important part of my life for the last 45 years, as I participated in their first writing workshop when I was 15 years old. I am and will always remain an avid supporter because I know firsthand what magic this organization performs every day.”

*Lourdes Rosado, YC Board Vice President & YC Alumna*

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“Youth Communication’s mission to amplify youth voices is more important than ever. I am grateful and honored to serve as a board member. Congratulations to all the honorees.”

*Troy Williams, YC Board Treasurer*



*Corporate Sponsors*

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**[solidcore]**



A logo consisting of two overlapping speech bubbles, one grey and one white, to the left of the text 'youth COMMUNICATION' where 'youth' is in red and 'COMMUNICATION' is in grey.

**youth**  
COMMUNICATION

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# DONATE

## *A Brighter Future*

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To donate, please scan the QR code:



**Need Help?**

**Any member of the YC staff is on hand to help.**

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### **SILENT AUCTION**

To bid in the silent auction,  
please scan the QR code:



**Need Help?**

**Please ask any member of the YC staff for assistance.**



*Elevate youth voices today and shape  
a brighter future for the next generation!*

# 43 YEARS



AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICE

IN EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

# 48 AWARDS

# 86%

OF STUDENTS SAY THEY FEEL THEY HAVE STAFF & STUDENTS WHO THEY CAN TALK TO IF THEY NEED HELP

*Real  
Teens.*

*Real  
Stories.*

*Real  
Change.*

# 2 MILLION

YOUTH IMPACTED AND COUNTING!



[WWW.YOUTHCOMM.ORG](http://WWW.YOUTHCOMM.ORG)