



## Youth Job Center

Getting a job. Launching a future.

# *Hope and Gratitude*

### **From the Executive Director:**

Happy New Year! Every year, this sentiment depicts a contrast between the dark, cold days of the year and the hope of what's to come. Despite the darkness, I know it's important to focus on the potential for the future and everything for which I am grateful.

When I was emerging from a difficult period in my life, a friend encouraged me by saying I could do anything with enough effort: be the best at my waitress job, break up with a boyfriend, change a tire. Build upon every little success to make it a larger success, and *practice* being grateful, despite the difficulties of my life at that time. It can be particularly challenging to remember to be grateful when times are tough, but this practice is the very thing that makes me a relentless optimist.

So here are a few things I'm grateful for:

- Family (so much so)
- My trusted friends and colleagues who push me to be better
- My work helping young people tap into the incredible reserves and potential that already exist within them
- Work that is simultaneously hair-raising, challenging, full of opportunity and absolutely wonderful
- A community that believes we *CAN* create equitable opportunities for all residents
- And of course, **all of you**, the many generous supporters, volunteers and partners of YJC

On behalf of the youth we serve, please accept our deepest thanks for your support and partnership. I look forward to a future of hope and possibility that we can first imagine, and then create, for young people in need.

Sincerely,

Karen Tollenaar Demorest  
Executive Director

# Senior Days of Action

YJC worked with Umoja Student Development Corporation this month to hold Senior Days of Action at Sullivan and Gage Park High Schools. Seniors discussed their plans for after graduation with volunteers, heard from alumni about their own career paths, and participated in a YJC-led 30-second pitch workshop.



## Gage Park: Dec. 7

Thirty volunteers from MB Financial conducted one-on-one interviews with GPHS seniors to hear about their career plans after high school. Ten GPHS alumni spoke to the students about their own career paths.

## Sullivan: Dec. 14

Thirty-five volunteers from over 25 Chicago businesses met with seniors from Sullivan High School. Eight Sullivan alumni were present to share their own post-high school career paths.



## Save the Date...

### *The Infinity Ball: A World of Possibilities*

*March 11, 2017  
Doors open 6:30 p.m.*

*Ravenswood Event Center  
4043 N. Ravenswood  
Chicago, IL 60613*

## *YJC's Wishes for 2017*



Dear Evanston invited Evanston organizations that work hard to make Evanston a vibrant, just and equitable city to send in their holiday greetings and wishes for Evanston in 2017. Hear from YJC staff, clients and board members in our [holiday 2016 video](#)!

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## *Thank you for your donation!*

Thank you for your generous support this year! We surpassed our goals for both Giving Tuesday and our Annual Appeal, raising more than \$110,000.

Whether it is a young person who walks through our door or a high school student landing a first job, your support is essential in ensuring our youth have the opportunity to find jobs and start successful careers.

We are committed to improving outcomes for youth and young adults by helping them achieve lasting and successful job placements. Your generosity makes this possible.

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