



Partners for Youth
with Disabilities

40^{YEARS}

ANNIVERSARY

IMPACT 20 REPORT 25



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LYNN GONSALVES

Dear **Friends, Partners, and Supporters**,

This year has been nothing short of extraordinary for Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD). As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2025, we are proud to share a year filled with celebration, expansion, and transformation.

We marked **40 years of PYD's unwavering commitment** to empowering youth with disabilities, celebrated **10 years of the Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame**, and honored **35 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**—three powerful milestones that underscore our legacy and continued advocacy.

PYD's impact continues to grow. In FY25, we served **551 youth** and trained **2,209 professionals**, expanding our geographical footprint and deepening our reach across communities. Our LEARN platform development is opening new doors for accessible learning and mentorship, and the success of our **40th Anniversary Party** was a joyful testament to the strength of our community.

Looking ahead, we are energized by the future structure of PYD. With innovation and inclusion at the core, we are building a more sustainable and scalable organization—one that will continue to meet the evolving needs of youth with disabilities.

The **FY25 Impact Report** is a testament to our consistent growth, persistence, and impact in the face of challenges. It reflects the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who make our mission possible every day.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We invite you to explore the report and celebrate with us as we continue to build a more inclusive world.

With gratitude,



Lynn Gonsalves
Executive Director
Partners for Youth with Disabilities



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PYD EMPOWERS YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND BECOME ACTIVE, CONFIDENT MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



PARTY 4 PYD

Our signature fundraiser, highlighted PYD's 40th year anniversary and honored 20 organizations and individuals for their impact on PYD.



1ST ANNUAL MACY'S FASHION SHOW

PYD's youth demonstrated their dream career through clothes, as they modeled Macy's looks down the runway at the 1st annual Macy's Fashion Show



DISABILITY MENTORING HALL OF FAME

PYD inducted 9 individuals and 1 organization as part of the 10th annual Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame, and featured keynote speaker Rebecca Cokley.



35TH ADA MARCH CELEBRATION

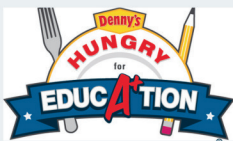
Staff and PYD participants had a chance to celebrate 35 years of the ADA by participating in a march in downtown Boston.

GRATITUDE TO OUR PARTNERS



GEICO CHANGEMAKER SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

GEICO awarded 10 scholarships to college students with disabilities in the fields of Business, Finance, Mathematics, Computer Science, and/or Marketing. Geico also funds the Dinah F.B. Cohen fellowship fall cohort.



DENNY'S HUNGRY FOR EDUCATION

Once again, PYD partnered with Denny's Hungry for Education to grant \$9,000 in scholarships to three high school and three college students with disabilities across the country.



DINAH F.B.COHEN FELLOWSHIP

Macy's sponsored the spring cohort of the Dinah Cohen fellowship spring cohort, consisting of a combined 700 hours of work over a 12-week period.



ACCESS TO LEARN PLATFORM

Thanks for the generosity of the Liberty Mutual Foundation, PYD provides access to our online learning platform, LEARN, to all Liberty Mutual Foundation grantees.

MENTORING

Mentoring is PYD's flagship program that has served youth with disabilities since 1985. Our mentoring program connects youth with disabilities ages 12-24 with an adult mentor who provides guidance, support, and encouragement and work together on personal, career, or independence goals.

"My mentor Rachel is great! We have spent time visiting different museums throughout Cambridge and Boston. My favorite was an exhibit we saw of Glass Flowers. We usually meet twice a month and have a Zoom meeting monthly. We have a great time having our favorite lunch at Shake Shack. I really enjoy spending time with Rachel. I've learned that Rachel loves ASL and we have been practicing when we're together. **I appreciate that she's learning American Sign Language, it makes communication easier."**

- Maya, mentee



"I didn't realize how much I would learn from this experience. I thought it would be me in a supervisory or mentoring role to my mentee. As much as I feel like I've taught him, and I'm sure there have been many instances where he's looked up to me for advice or for mentorship on different conflicts he's had, **I actually think I've learned a lot from him."**

- Alec, mentor



**40 ACTIVE MENTOR
MATCHES IN FY25**

CAREER READINESS

Career Readiness addresses barriers to employment for youth with disabilities via a curriculum based on classroom learning, real world experiences, and mentoring from professionals. PYD's career readiness program equips youth with disabilities with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in the workforce.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTS

20 schools across greater Boston served by our career readiness programs

67% of program participants obtained employment because of the skills gained from participating

86% engaged in at least one "real world" experience like a job shadowing



*"Lorenzo is hands down **the best intern we've ever had.** He's a delightful young man who has many useful skills to make it in this world."*

- Bob H., internship supervisor at Comicazi, comic book store



314 YOUTH SERVED
25 BUSINESS PARTNERS
ACROSS GREATER BOSTON

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) -

63 youth attended this 3 days/2 nights conference for Massachusetts youth held at Emerson College.

YLF is designed to help students with disabilities develop advocacy and leadership skills, equipping them to be better prepared for future employment, higher education, and independent living.



*"The speakers that come in are so motivational and inspiring. **They completely revolutionize the way that I feel about myself** because I'm like, oh, like I could do that. Like, I could be more than just functioning in a society that doesn't always treat people with disabilities well. **I can actually thrive, make an impact on other people's lives and share my story and bring them happiness and hope.**"*

- Annalise, YLF Peer Leader



THE 2025 YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM OFFERED 28 UNIQUE WORKSHOPS TO ATTENDEES.

DINAH F.B. COHEN FELLOWSHIP

PYD's **Dinah F.B. Cohen Fellowship Program** is a twelve-week paid leadership and professional skills development for college students and recent graduates with disabilities. This national fellowship is highly competitive, with **385 applications in FY25 of which 20 were chosen**. Fellows create a group project that addresses a compelling community need related to disability inclusion. Fellows acquire skills, access resources, develop a network. FY25 project reports are available on our website.



FY25 GROUP PROJECT TOPICS

Hidden in Plain Site: Making Access the Standard; a website of resources for college students with disabilities

Accessibility through the Ages: an educational video project highlighting the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Bridging the Gap: Designing Inclusive Host Family Experiences for Students with Disabilities; a research project detailing best practices for accessible study abroad experiences

Disability Inclusion Resource Guides - created to help young people with disabilities learn more about education, health and wellness, activism, and more.

Adaptive Fashion - a research project in collaboration with Macy's, in which a fellow extensively gathered information on the best way to integrate adaptive fashion into a clothing line.



*I'm seeing the world through a different lens after this fellowship, and it's one that **more easily includes me, my needs, and the contributions that I am able to bring** to the table in various settings.*

- Dinah F.B. Cohen Fellow, Spring 2025

**FY25 FELLOWS COME FROM
13 DIFFERENT U.S. STATES**

ONLINE LEARNING

PYD offers comprehensive online learning programs designed to promote inclusivity in organizations and empower youth with disabilities. Our programs focus on three main areas: DEI inclusion training, professional development, and continuing education.

LEARN PLATFORM

In FY25, PYD launched Learn 2.0, a redesigned platform featuring accessible design, interactive micro-learning, and video interviews with people with disabilities. Learn 2.0 offers a more engaging learning experience in partnership with the disability community. **#LeadWithLivedExperience**

CERTIFICATE TRAINING & PDPS

PYD offers online professional training programs and online/hybrid certificate programs:

DISABILITY MENTORING CERTIFICATE

Enables organizations with mentoring programs to run a more inclusive programs for youth, volunteers, and staff with disabilities

CAREER READINESS TRAINER CERTIFICATE

Train to teach PYD's Career Readiness curriculum, with opportunities for live ongoing support, and evaluation and technical assistance from PYD staff.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As registered PD providers in Massachusetts, we provide MA teachers PDPs for our online courses.



**PYD LEARNING
PLATFORMS HAD 440
TOTAL USERS IN FY25**

WORKFORCE INCLUSION SERVICES

PYD provides training, services, and resources on disability inclusion to organizations and companies across the country. Demand for these services continues to increase, as companies and organizations expand their DEI trainings to include disability.

DEI TRAINING & RESOURCES

In FY25, PYD trained **2,209** professionals in disability inclusion best practices - **1,769** through live trainings and **440** through online trainings. Our two most popular trainings are: ***Introduction to Disability & Inclusion and Creating Inclusive Spaces.***

NATIONAL DISABILITY MENTORING COALITION (NDMC)

In FY25 the NDMC had **808** members, who receive a monthly newsletter with disability resources and access to disability networking events throughout the year.

FY25 events included training on best practices for building neuroinclusivity into your mentoring program & networking with disability mentoring hall of fame inductees to learn mentoring tips & disability resources



PYD SPOTLIGHT

THE DISABILITY MENTORING CERTIFICATE (101 LEVEL TRACK)

In this 4-month long hybrid program, members learn how to run mentoring programs that are inclusive to people with disabilities.

In fiscal year 2025, a total of 47 professionals received their disability inclusion certificate from 20 unique mentoring organizations across 13 states.

Collectively, it is estimated that **7,860** young people will be impacted by the organizations that graduated from the Fall 2024 cohort.

PILOTED THE SENIOR CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM (A 201 LEVEL TRACK FOR DISABILITY MENTORING CERTIFICATE GRADUATES)

Included 12 participants from 9 unique mentoring organizations across 8 different U.S. states.

Participants completed approximately **30 hours** of work including online coursework, one-on-one peer meetings, live convenings, & presented on plans to advance disability inclusion practices in their organization.

YOUTH SUCCESS STORY

PYD's Career Readiness Program is an inclusive job-readiness program that addresses barriers to employment for youth and young adults with disabilities.

Part of the Career Readiness program involves providing various participants with paid internship opportunities. Kyle, who recently completed an internship at Billerica Access Television (BATV), recalled what skills he learned through this experience. We also heard about his progress from both his internship supervisor and one of PYD's Career Readiness Program Coordinators, who teach Kyle:

*"BATV is a local cable access TV studio. During my internship with them, I learned to film and edit content, as well as write my own scripts for television. The people there were very friendly, helpful, and welcoming and I worked with some incredible mentors. **Thanks to PYD for this supportive and spectacular experience! I will continue to use these skills in the future.**"*

- Kyle, Career Readiness Student & BATV Intern



*"I'm so happy he's had a good time interning with us, it's been a blast working with him! **I've noticed he's become much more confident and comfortable with production**, so I'm delighted that he's feeling more confident in general. He's a really smart guy, and it was a pleasure hosting him. Looking forward to seeing a lot of him over the summer and beyond!"*

-Isaac, BATV Intern Supervisor

*"When I first started teaching Kyle, he was a very shy and quiet student. Over the months I have had the opportunity to see him grow and come out of his shell. **He has shown creativity through his internship and is noticeably more outgoing and expressive!**"*

- Kate, Career Readiness Program Coordinator



PYD IN NUMBERS



**YOUTH
PARTICIPANTS FROM
136 TOWNS (119 IN MA)**

26%

**PARTICIPANT
RETENTION RATE**

67%

**PARTICIPANT
LONG-TERM
EMPLOYMENT RATE**

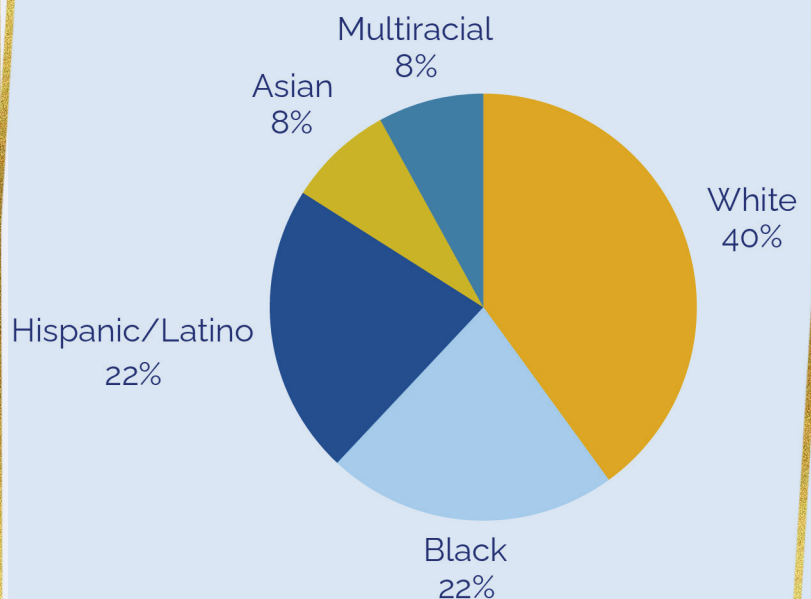
86%

**PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED
THE PROGRAM
ENCOURAGED THEM TO
STICK TO THEIR GOALS**

89%

**PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED A HIGH
SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION
(COMPARED TO 80% OF ALL
GRADUATES WITH DISABILITIES)**

RACE





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SCAN TO DONATE AND
SUPPORT OUR WORK!

