

PARTNERS FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

# IMPACT REPORT



# 2024



# MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TERE RAMOS

In 2025, PYD celebrates 40 years since its founding in 1985. Our first year we served 9 youth with disabilities through our mentoring program. This year we served 572 youth and 2,695 professionals in all of our programs, and in our lifetime we have served over 15,000 youth and trained over 15,000 professionals in inclusion best practices.

As we reflect on fiscal year 2024, PYD is proud of our work and impact empowering youth with disabilities. This year we reorganized some of our departments, focusing on strengthening our programs and operations and expanding the number of youth we reach in our remaining core areas of work. Our goal is to unlock the potential within our community, increase the impact of our work, and align it with our strategic vision.

PYD's reorganization has allowed us to focus on where to grow in scope and impact. Our YLF program expanded from 47 to 65 youth and added a day to its conference. Mentoring increased in participants and expanded its geographic areas of service. We are working on new, expanded and innovative versions of some of our programs. I'm proud to announce that Career Readiness, LEARN and our Mentor Certification are rolling out new, revamped versions of their curriculums by the end of FY25, bringing the latest in instructional design and accessibility technology.

This FY24 Impact Report is a testament to the resilience of our community and the support of our partners and collaborators. I'm deeply grateful for our participants, our exceptional staff, our dedicated Board of Directors, and generous donors and partners who make this work possible.

In Gratitude,



## Board of Directors

Jean Joy, Chair  
Lori Andrews  
Andrew Bentley  
Oanh Bui  
J. Van Gurley  
Jay Krish  
Mark Nikolewski  
Mark Rocca  
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Rebecca Cronin  
*Youth Services Director*

Kristin Humphrey  
*Workforce Inclusion Director*

Nick Manley  
*Director of Online Learning Programs*

Robert Peters  
*Director of Administration & Finance*

**PYD empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential and become active, confident members of their communities.**

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



## Honors Night

Formerly Mentor Appreciation Night, celebrated the achievements of our youth and mentors throughout the year

## Party 4 PYD

Our signature fundraiser, highlighted the Career Readiness Program and honored GEICO and PYD participant Nataly Barreto



## 31 Nights of Lights

Selected for the December celebration when the Prudential Tower is lit in support of a non-profit



## Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame

PYD inducted 6 individuals and 1 organization who are supporting mentee's mental health and transforming communities

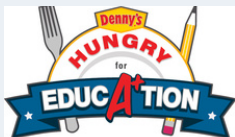


## GRATITUDE TO OUR PARTNERS



### 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 disabled youth ages 12-24 with an adult mentor who provides guidance, support, and encouragement and work together on personal, career, or independence goals.

*"My mentorship with Kyra continues to be one of the greatest opportunities I've been given in life. I am continuously inspired by her drive and determination to become a successful leader herself, and pursue all of her dreams fearlessly and unapologetically."*

-Sarah, PYD staff member and mentor



*"Walter is a blessing to our family. You guys couldn't have picked a better match for Ethan! Walter is definitely like Ethan's big brother! They're two peas in a pod! Absolutely PERFECT match!"*

-Parent of mentoring program participant



**107+ active mentor matches in FY24**



# 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 disabled youth with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in the workforce.

## FY24 Highlights

20 schools across greater Boston served by our career readiness programs

52% of program participants obtained employment because of the skills gained from participating

83% engaged in at least one “real world” experience like a job shadowing



*“When the student first came to us, he was hesitant and lacked self-confidence. He learned that he knew so much more than he claimed. I believe that we encouraged him to take pride in what he knows and where he needs to continue learning.”*

*-Business internship partner*



**225 Youth Served**  
**20+ Business Partners**  
**across greater Boston**



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP

We offer two programs 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.

**Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)** - 65 youth attended this 6 day/5 nights conference for Massachusetts youth held at Emerson College. Youth practiced advocacy, work, and living skills, and visited the MA Statehouse, among other sites.

**Young Leaders Rising (YLR)** - is a hybrid program. In FY24, 35 youth from 26 towns participated. In person activities included a visit to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute to talk about voting rights.



*"We went sailing and I saw that we were all able to participate in the activity, no matter what limitations we might have - it was a very empowering experience."*

*-YLR participant*



**Youth leadership programs participants totaled a combined 6,140 hours of collective learning**



# ACCESS TO ARTS

During FY24, PYD's **Access to Arts (ATA)** ran nine programs for youth from 41 towns across MA, engaging them in theater, acting, music, dance, and visual arts with support from teaching artists. Youth created a 3-panel tile mosaic installation at Spaulding Hospital, and a large mural at the Shore Educational Collaborative.

## The Access to Arts Program Sunsets

ATA sunset as a stand alone program in August 2024, as part of our strategic reorganization and alignment of programs with our strategic vision. We plan to incorporate the arts into other programs in the future.

To celebrate the legacy of ATA/ATT, we hosted one last Summer Institute and showcase. Youth and alumni of the program came together one last time to create and perform art across several different mediums.



*"This program helped me find my real self... before I came to this I was really soft-spoken and now I am more confident in talking and expressing my ideas."*

-PYD youth participant



**Total Youth  
Participants: 86**

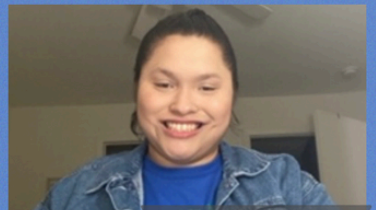
# DINAH F.B. COHEN FELLOWSHIP

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 150 applications in FY24 of which 20 were chosen. Fellows write a group project that addresses a community need and includes a supported plan with identified outcomes. Fellows acquire skills, access resources, develop a network. FY24 project reports are available on our website.

## FY24 Group Project Topics

***Disability Disclosure in Personal Relationships Guidebook***- created to help youth with disabilities learn about navigating their disabilities in relationships.

***Disability Justice and Education Guidebook***- for high school students who want to learn more about disability justice and education accommodations to help further their education.



***“This was the first disability focused space I’ve been a part of and so my takeaway is that there is community to be found anywhere, and that those communities can really help us to grow in our own ways while supporting each other.”***

*-Dinah F.B. Cohen Fellow*

**FY24 fellows come from 20 different U.S. states**



# ONLINE LEARNING

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

## LEARN PLATFORM

In FY24, PYD began the revamp for Learn 2.0. Launching in FY25, it will offer engaging content, cutting edge design, and authenticity to the experience of the disability community. Just as with our original platform, we have partnered with the disability community in developing content and perspectives.

## CERTIFICATE TRAINING & PDPS

PYD offers online professional training programs and 3 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.



**LEARN has 27,000  
registered users and  
41 courses**

# 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 FY24, PYD trained 2,695 professionals in disability inclusion best practices - 1,736 through live trainings and 959 through online trainings. Our two most popular trainings are: *Introduction to Disability & Inclusion* and *Creating Inclusive Spaces*.

### **PYD SPOTLIGHT: THE DISABILITY MENTORING CERTIFICATE**

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

**In fiscal year 2024, a total of 27 professionals received their disability mentoring certification, and 15 organizations from 9 states received their disability mentoring certification.**

It is estimated that 4,500 young people will be impacted by the organizations that graduated from the Fall 2023 cohort.

## NATIONAL DISABILITY MENTORING COALITION (NDMC)

In FY24 the NDMC had 739 members, who receive a monthly newsletter with disability resources and access to disability networking events throughout the year.

FY24 events included group project presentations by the Cohen fellows and disability inclusion action plans from the Disability Mentoring Certification Cohort graduates.



NDMC Co-Chair Edmund Asiedu ran the NYC Marathon in November '22 & '24 to raise funds for the NDMC and PYD

**2,695 professionals trained  
in disability inclusion  
practices**



# ★ YOUTH SUCCESS ★

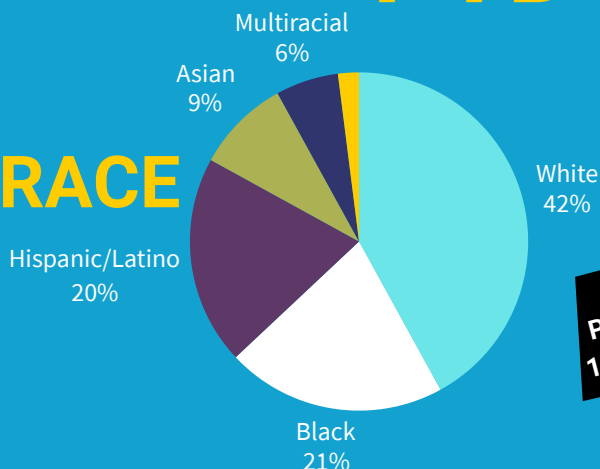
My name is Nataly, and I am 21 years old. Three years ago I was in college majoring in psychology and working two jobs. One night I had a severe stroke that left me paralyzed. Overnight, I faced challenges that I never imagined. I had to learn to talk and care for myself again, and I had to drop out of university. Last year I attended PYD's youth leadership forum. As a person with new disabilities, it changed my life!



YLF was my first experience away from home since the stroke. I was nervous at first. But YLF was a transformative experience. I received training to navigate life with a disability, and was paired with a mentor with the same lived experience as me. YLF helped me to come out of my shell! PYD's caring staff encouraged me to participate in other programs, and after YLF, I have tried everything PYD has to offer. I have sailed the Charles River, attended Red Sox games, even made a mosaic of my black cat (which now hangs at Spaulding Rehab Hospital!) I have made many friends, and we see each other weekly. PYD has become my family, and I have come to realize their amazing value! It is a haven for youth with all disabilities, offering support that fosters independence, growth, and community. **PYD is a remarkable place. It is a unique community that improves the lives of youth like me.**

## PYD IN NUMBERS

### RACE



YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS FROM  
150 TOWNS (130 IN MA)

55.3%

PARTICIPANT  
RETENTION RATE



67%

PARTICIPANT  
LONG-TERM  
EMPLOYMENT  
RATE



Partners for Youth  
with Disabilities



[www.pyd.org](http://www.pyd.org)

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