

Youth TimeBanking for Generation Z (YTB4GenZ) – Ages 14-25 (ver. June 2, 2021)

Innovation – YTB is Exemplary.

Many youth programs focus on youth solely as service recipients. YTB addresses this one-sided focus. YTB provides youth with opportunities to “move from helped to helper”. Our approach creates a sustainable progression of reciprocal relationships that improve mental health through contribution while fostering civic engagement and strengthening coping capacities.

Assessments of community-based wraparound programs for youth with complex needs showed that outcomes were limited by low levels of natural supports and community connections. YTB was developed over ten years building on Edgar Cahn’s (footnote) seminal point that youth “have a deep need to feel that what they do matters.” YTB was presented at 2018-2019 TCOM conferences and recognized in 2019 by CARF International as an exemplary practice worthy of sharing with the field.

YTB’s emphasis on contribution engages youth as co-producers of their mental health. Just as physical exercise is essential to physical health, community engagement is essential to mental health. YTB does not replace clinical services; it complements them. Its carefully calibrated approach augments preventive practice and makes interventions more effective. YTB supports successful transition-to-community and promotes sustainable transitioning to adulthood.

Scope – YTB is Community.

YTB4GenZ is Timebanking customized for Generation Z, ages 14-25. Timebanking is a system of service exchange that uses time as the currency. YTB4GenZ can fill gaps in opportunities for marginalized youth. Our vision is a world with *No More Throw Away People (The Co-Production Imperative)*; book title by Edgar Cahn, PhD, founder of Timebanks.org.

In YTB4GenZ, Program Coordinators support youth in identifying opportunities to make contributions to others and practice adult community roles. Youth develop social capital and community through civic participation. They select, plan, and manage activities, and report service activity from the field via text message or e-mail. Youth activity hours earn support, resources, or a gift card for a local business. YTB consists of 1+ hour of service per week, 2-way reciprocal exchanges, 3-month seasons, 4 Activity Themes (Learn, Make, Digital, Care), and Timebanking’s 5 Core Values.

Coordinators join monthly Coordinator sessions and quarterly TechSoup Connect for Timebanking. Activities occur in-person or virtually; on a recurring or topic-related basis; within the home or in community. Signature projects include anti-bullying, Little Free Libraries, community gardens, and digital media, which help youth develop strengths and experience something bigger than themselves. They take on roles – individually or in teams – e.g., facilitating online sessions, telling stories, demonstrating activities, providing event support.

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Impact – YTB benefits Anyone.

YTB's benefits radiate in multiple directions, consistent with our core values. Youth and communities benefit – which relates to Timebanking's Core Value of *Social Networks*. YTB brings the other values to life – youth are *Assets* to the community, their service to others is *Redefined Work*, paying it forward demonstrates *Reciprocity*, and being accountable is *Respect*.

YTB reduces the pain of social isolation and losses in civic engagement due to COVID. YTB works for youth who participate – they develop contacts, learn about community, and help others. Youth receive support and training. They become valued contributors in their communities.

Any youth can benefit from YTB, including those with depression, special needs, or chronic conditions, and youth in recovery or involved with juvenile justice. System-Of-Care youth have shown improvements in optimism, community involvement, and expression of talents/interests. Mental health experts tell us that offering service improves our ability to cope with stress and depression. Helping others helps us.

Youth complete a YTB Passport listing people they met, organizations they helped, and strengths they developed; providing input for resumes and job or college applications. Data visuals show YTB progress and inspire youth to continue. YTB outputs convert to YTB outcomes as transactional activities transform into relational experiences. Person-centered analytics measure outcomes. Digital storytelling captures outcomes, anchors hope, and is a service contribution. People feel needed and want to show up another day.

Potential – YTB works Anywhere.

YTB is a proven model that was developed and field-tested over four years in NJ's System of Care. Wraparound has scaled nationally. YTB effectively complements and augments systems-of-care and restorative practices. In 2020, YTB was implemented in St. Petersburg, FL and Queenhythe, Jamaica. YTB pilot projects are possible for CT, NC, and NJ. YTB NJ.org leads TechSoup Connect Focus Area for Timebanking. YTB coaching is available along with technical assistance for creating a YTB website and using a text-messaging application for reporting activity. YTB can be a standalone implementation or a program within a community organization.

Budget: \$45,000, YTB Program implementation.

\$32,500 Coordinator (25 hours/week, \$25/hour)

\$7,500 Program: 25 youth (\$300/youth) supplies, food.

\$2,500 Technology: website, software; \$2,500 Services: advertising, insurance.

Development: \$20,000 – develop-reproduce YTB Training materials.

Evaluation: \$10,000 – plan-conduct project evaluation.

Training: \$10,000 – create Training Certification; Legal: \$5,000 – YTB trademarks.

YTB NJ.org budget without grant: \$10,000 for technology, supplies, marketing.

Support: TechSoup, AT&T Pioneers, WaterSpout Consulting, Benevity, Network For Good, and advisors in mental health and data visualization.