

**What is a Youth Worker?**

Youth workers are any professionals who work for, with, or on behalf of children and youth to facilitate their personal, social, ethical and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and place in society as they make the transition from dependence to independence. This includes after school professionals, artists, case managers, teachers, coaches...

**What does YDPN do?**

YDPN exists to professionalize the youth worker workforce in a manner consistent with our values of intentionality, connectedness, and innovation. We do this through the YDPN Ecology (see page 2). Instrumental to our Ecology is inspiring and realizing dreams and outcomes across the Four Points of Connection. The Four Points of Connection and an example of some activities are:

- **Intrapersonal Connection:** We dream of youth workers that are empowered because they are connected to their intentionality. We dream of shared spaces that promote reflection; values clarification and development; healing, rejuvenation, and self-care; and advocacy skill development. *Activities include:* Our Path to Peace Toolkit, Days of Rejuvenation and Self-Care.
- **People Connections:** We dream of youth workers that are celebrated for their work and intentionality. We dream of messages everywhere that say youth development is important work. *Activities include:* We Are Youth Workers documentary project and celebrations.
- **Professional Connection:** We dream of youth workers that are professional and collective. We dream of equitable, accessible to relevant educational and professional development opportunities, especially those led by peers. *Activities include:* Youth Worker Brown Bags, AFA TAC Leadership Track, YDPN Power (an eNewsletter)
- **Financial Connections:** We dream of youth workers that are financially self-sufficient. We dream of a network of economic support that builds financial literacy, provides affordable housing, health care, and loan forgiveness; and adequately compensates its employees. *Activities include:* Financial Literacy Workshops.

**How did YDPN come about?**

YDPN is and has been driven by our main constituency, youth workers. The Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) led an eight week session of youth workers back in 2000. This answered a need among youth workers to have an intentional and supportive learning space; however, after eight weeks, it was over. In 2003, YDPN officially launched as a volunteer-run collective. Since then, YDPN's programming has grown from peer-led trainings and events to full-on field-building with two staff people and a steering committee comprised of Bay Area youth workers who help shape the network's ecology.

**How can I find out more information?**

Visit our Web site at [www.ydpn.org](http://www.ydpn.org) to find out more about our history, purpose and vision for youth work in the Bay Area and beyond.

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