# YW3CA

Youth Newsletter

Spring 2023

Youth Talk Back



eliminating racism empowering women **ywca** 



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

PAUSE, BREATHE, ACHIEVE,

SUPPORT FOR OUR YOUTH & FAMILIES



# Written for Students by Students!

# Celeste Editor-in-Chief

Celeste is an 8th grader living in Lansdale PA. She has been participating in the YW3CA's Youth Empowerment Programs (YEP) for the past four years. She is the Student Editor-in-Chief for YW3CA Youth Talk Back. When she is not writing articles or stories, she can be found reading (mostly fantasy), acting, or chatting with her friends. She hopes you enjoy the newsletter.

# Leyna Assistant Editorin-Chief

**Leyna** is a 7th grader who goes to the Pottstown Middle school. She has been with the YWCA for the past 3 years. Her title at Youth Talk Back is Assistant Editor-in-Chief. She loves reading and being outside. She loved creating the newsletter and hopes you enjoy reading it!

### Clara Author

Clara is a 6th grade student who enjoys reading and hanging out with friends. When she is reading, she likes graphic novels and certain kinds of books with WORDS! She plays 2 instruments: Clarinet and Alto Sax. She has been in YW3CA for one year and hopes to be in it for awhile. Clara hopes enjoy this newsletter!

### Lilly Author

**Lilly** is a 7th Grader at the Pottstown middle school and is super excited to be writing with this amazing group! She joined Youth Talk Back in 2022 December, and as soon as she discovered the program- she was hooked! Ever since she was little, she's been writing short stories, mainly in fiction and fantasy. Her favorite part of writing literature is creating interesting characters and plot lines with lots and lots of detail. Lilly is extremely ecstatic to see what you think of the newsletter, and hopes to make you smile!

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YWCA envisions a world that holds equal promise for every person. We stand in solidarity with our community members against racial injustice and work towards a world where equality exists in every facet of our society.

Through our collective work, YWCA Tri-County Area will be known as an organization where all people, but especially women, girls and families of color, receive trauma responsive, culturally competent, education services that will support the enrichment of their lives.

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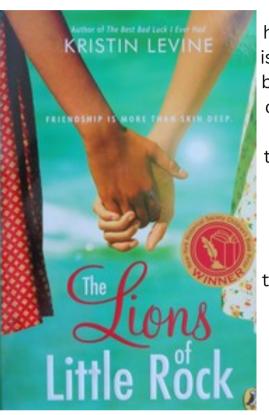
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# 



### The Lions of Little Rock



The Lions of Little Rock is an extraordinary story! It's a historical fiction genre written by Kristen Levine. The storyline is during the civil rights movement in Little Rock, Arkansas. The book is about two new friends who are starting the school year off. One of them is a new girl named Liz who is brave and kind. The other one is Marlee who is timid and smart. They both go to an all white school, and are doing a project together. Then... WAIT, IF YOU HATE SPOILERS THEN STOP HERE, BUT READ THE BOOK. I'M SERIOUS.

Liz gets kicked out right before the oral presentation! Marlee HATES public speaking. She takes some tips that Liz gave her to power through it, but is still really scared. Afterwards, she is told that Liz was caught passing as a white. Marlee and Liz struggle to stay friends through tough times, but somehow they always make it work. Join Liz and Marlee as they travel through their friendship that shall never break after what they've been through. Trust me, once you read this you'll never want it to end.

-Written by: Leyna, Grade 7

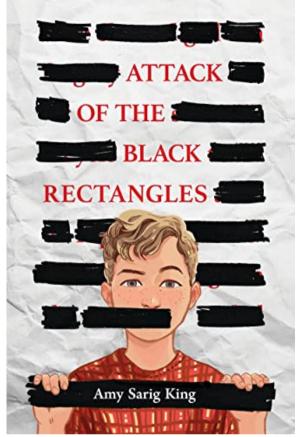
### The Series of Unfortunate Events

I'm going to write about a TV/book series called, "The Series of Unfortunate Events." Once you read or watch it you will want to do the alternative. It is written by Daniel Handler who is under the pen name Lemony Snicket. This story is about three kids named Violet, Klause, and Sunny Baudelaire who turn into orphans because of an unfortunate fire. (you see where this is going, right?) The villain, Count Olaf, wants to steal their big fortune. He tries multiple times to find a sneaky way to get the fortune but.. (STOP: if you don't like spoilers please stop) his plans don't work out. He murders people and is almost about to get trapped but at the end of each book he escapes. When things look like they are getting better they aren't. I will not spoil any more for you. You will just have to read the book or watch the show. If you like a depressing but good story and cliff hangers, this is for you. Hope you enjoy it as much as I did. Happy reading or watching!!!

-Written by: Clara, Grade 6

# BOOK NOOK





### **Attack of the Black Rectangles**

Ages 10 to 14

Book Review by Celeste, Grade 8

Attack of the Black Rectangles by Amy Sarig King is a realistic fiction novel about a twelve year old boy named Mac. Mac lives in a town with very strict rules and his sixth grade teacher is none other than Ms. Sett, the person who makes and enforces those rules. Ms. Sett believes that girls should not wear shorts to school, that junk food should be illegal, and that the information kids read in their books should be censored. Mac is much like any other twelve year old boy until his friend Marci alerts him to the fact that some of the words in their book for school have been blacked out in sharpie. Marci is a strong feminist who speaks out against anything she sees wrong. Marci and Mac join forces with their friend Denis to find out who did it, what the blacked out words are and why. The friends embark on a mission to get the adults around them to listen and stop acting like blacked out words in their book are no big deal.

Between it all, Mac has to balance the hardships in the rest of his life. His divorced parents are having trouble and it is causing upheaval for him and his grandfather as well. When it comes down to it, Mac is just a kid who wants to like school, have fun, and make his town a better place.

# City Spies Series by James Ponti Book Review by Celeste

Book Review by Celeste

City Spies is a series by James Ponti. It is for youth ages 8 to 14 who enjoy

adventure fiction and spy stories. There are three books; City Spies, The Golden Gate, and Forbidden City. A fourth book, City of the Dead, is scheduled to be released in 2023.

The themes of the City Spies series include friendship, adventure, travel, spy missions, and more. City Spies is about a group of five pre-teens and teens with genius abilities. These young people from around the globe are in need of a space to use their strengths and meet other people like them. They are led by a man who has had so many names he has forgotten them all. The young people call him Mother.

Book one starts with the recruitment of the fifth member of the group, Sara. When Mother finds her, she is alone. She agrees to change her name to Brooklyn and go with Mother to England. Their small group of kids is part of a much bigger spy agency. Very few people know about them. They are considered a secret weapon.

Join Brooklyn, Sydney, Kat, Rio, Paris, and Mother, and they embark on missions that will test their friendship, skills, and teamwork to the utmost power. Can they do what they have been training for? Can they save the world?

JAMES PONTI

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# Self Care

# Celeste's Guide to Setting and Achieving Goals



#### What is a goal?

A goal is something you reach or aspire for. Something that you want to achieve or complete. Examples of goals include, making the soccer team, writing a story, winning an art contest or graduating from college. There are different types of goals.

#### **Long Term vs. Short Term**

There are long term goals and short term goals. Long term goals can be anything that takes from a year to many decades. Short term goals are goals that can be achieved in a short amount of time, usually a few weeks or months (a year or two might also be considered a short term goal). Often, in order to reach a long term goal, you have to reach several short term goals first.

#### So how do I set a goal?

Setting goals can be difficult. First you have to think about some things you want to do or achieve. Don't get wishes confused with goals. A wish would be to get a drum set, while a goal would be earning money to buy a drum set, or learning to play the drums.

Once you have decided what you want to achieve, pick a time frame you want to do it in. The key to this part of goal setting is not to make unrealistic goals for yourself. You can't learn the drums and join a rock band in one week! If you make unrealistic time frames to achieve your goals you might stress yourself out working towards it and be disappointed when you miss your deadline. When choosing a goal and time frame, it is usually easier to achieve a short term goal before moving onto something bigger.

#### But how do I achieve my goal???

Once you have your goal and time frame put in place, it is time for the action. You have to achieve your goal. This is by far the trickiest step to setting and achieving goals. This is not always as simple as it seems. There are several key things to help you achieve your goal. Firstly, you have to make sure your goal is not unrealistic (see 'So how do I set a goal?'). Secondly, you have to make sure your goal is something you really want to do. You have to be prepared to take time out of each day (or each week) to work towards your goal. To help achieve your goal, you might want to make a schedule. Buy or make a calendar. Set aside time each day or week to work towards your goal. If your goal is to finish a story or art project, you should set aside time every day/week to write or paint. If you want to make the travel basketball team, you should set aside time each day/week to work on your basketball skills.

#### What if that doesn't work?

Sometimes, working towards a goal by yourself isn't enough. Maybe you keep forgetting to practice lacrosse or study math. In this case, you should tell someone about the goal.

# Self Care

### Celeste's Guide to Setting and

### Achieving Goals (continued)

Maybe they can text you reminders each day to study, or help you find a skill class for lacrosse. Maybe they want to get better at math, too, and can work on something together. Or maybe they have another idea for goal setting. The good news is, even if telling a friend or family member doesn't work for you, it is still possible to achieve your goal. Try making a chart to keep track of your progress. Look back on your goal and time frame. Maybe you'll realize that your goal is more unrealistic than you thought. No matter what happens, remember, there is always a way.

#### What next?

If you achieve your goal, then what? Make another goal, of course! Maybe in the same direction as your other goal, another step towards a final product. Or your next goal could be something completely different. You might realize that you don't like baseball as much as you think and you want to try gymnastics. The most important thing to remember when setting goals is don't give up. And have fun, too! If your goal is causing stress or unnecessary pressure, try to rewire it a bit. Make easier to achieve goals and try to build up to the bigger one. You can do this!

## A Young Woman's Guide to Period Underwear

### By Celeste, Grade 8

Period underwear are a newer product to help girls and women take care of their menstrual cycles. They are an easy and nature-friendly way to hold the blood that is released during your period. Period underwear have a special, extra thick liner so they can hold blood like a pad. Some pluses of period underwear are that they are reusable, environmentally friendly, less messy than pads, and easy to clean and care for. Plus, they don't get very smelly. Currently, there are two major brands of period underwear, Thinx and Knix. Thinx has a special section of products called ThinxTeens, designed specially for young girls starting their periods. Period underwear come in all different styles and absorbencies. Some period underwear are designed to be worn with a tampon or cup, while others are made to wear on their own. How often you should change your period underwear depends on the absorbency of the underwear, and your flow. For example, I have a very heavy period. On a medium/heavy day, I bleed through Thinx period underwear (heaviest absorbency) in 2 to 3 hours, but on a light day I can wear them all day without changing them. If you are a first time period underwear user, it is probably a

good idea to get one pair of period underwear and try them out at home to see what works for you.

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# Self Care





### Stress in Middle School

Hi everyone! Today I'm going to talk to you about anxiety and stress. I don't know about you, but I find Middle School very stressful. I find it stressful because there is drama, peer pressure, schoolwork, and people. I'm going to show you how to cope in these five easy steps.

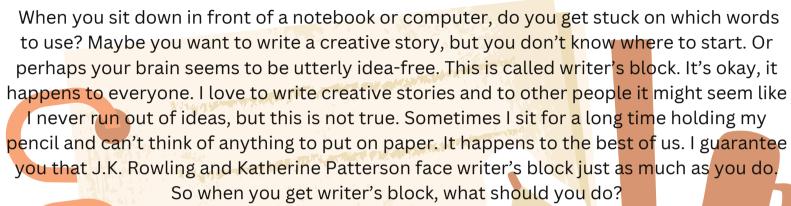
- **1.** First ask yourself, "Why do I feel stressed?" It could be that you're busy, have an upcoming test, friendship troubles, and more. I could go on all day.
- **2.** Talk to someone (preferably a trusted adult). It always feels nice to get some of your feelings out there (trust me, it's like lifting a huge weight off your shoulders). Talk to a teacher, counselor, principal, family friend/member, grand parent, a VERY trustworthy friend (not a friend that will tell everyone), or anyone else you trust. You can talk through ways you can cope, or just talk about why you feel that way.
- **3.** After you talk to someone, try to find the best coping strategy for YOU. Not your best friend, YOU. Here are some strategies, but feel free to come up with your own. If you're ever stressed in the moment (which you will be) you could try to focus on something else, like counting by sevens (7, 14, 21, 28, 35). You could also think about the future. Ask yourself, "Will this matter in 6 months?" You can also focus on your breathing. Take five minutes in a quiet place just to take a deep breath. The list goes on and on...
- **4.** Confront what you're stressed about. Let's say you're stressed about a test. You're taking the test, and you get stuck. Remind yourself that you studied or know the content. Also remind yourself that YOU CAN DO IT!
- **5.** Celebrate! Did you overcome what you're stressed about? Great if you did. It's also okay if you didn't, as long as you tried. If you're still super stressed, my advice is to repeat Step 2. Seriously, CELEBRATE. Have a spa day, hang out with your friends, play outside! Whatever makes you feel happy (as long as it's legal, safe, and celebrates your accomplishment). I hope you overcome whatever you're stressed about, and I hoped this article helped.

-Written by: Leyna

# Tips & Tricks

# Writing Made Easy: Tips for Young Authors

Written by Celeste, Grade 8



There are three key things to writing a good story. The first is to read a lot. The more you write, the more you need to read. Reading can give you inspiration and it can also teach you about the kinds of things you like. \*\*\*in order to write, read!\*\*\* That brings us to the second key thing to writing a good story. Write about something you are interested in. If octopuses bore you, and you start writing a story about them, not only will the story not be your best, you probably won't finish it because you don't enjoy the process. Even worse, you might think you don't like creative writing when really it is the octopuses that you don't like. \*\*\*creative writing is supposed to be fun\*\*\* The third key thing to writing a good story is to write a lot of bad stories first. Then, not to think about those stories as bad, because there is no such thing. Instead of thinking "that story is rubbish," think "huh,

that didn't work as well as I thought it did, I'll try something else next time." \*\*\*your first idea is never your best\*\*\*

But what do you do when you get writer's block? This is a question that has a different answer for everyone. I usually think about a book I read recently and take an idea from there and change it. Sometimes, you might just need to step away from your writing and come back later. How to get through writer's block is different for every person. Try a few different strategies and figure out what is the best way for you. When you get through writer's block once, it will always come back eventually. As an author, you need to be okay with that. Sometimes writer's block can be frustrating and upsetting. It is important not to take your frustration out on other people and to remember that no matter what happens, you will be able to make it through.

I used these two books by Gail Carson Levine to help me improve my story plots and make more interesting characters: Writing Magic: Creating Stories That Fly and Writer to Writer (sequel to Writing Magic). I hope these tips and books are helpful to you!



# Problems in Your Society: With a Solution! 3 Things That Bother Lilly

#### Introduction

Have you ever felt bothered about a problem in your society? Whether it's as small as a single hurtful comment or as big as water shortage? Have you ever considered attempting to mend those problems? I certainly have. Just like you, I am one small piece in our society. Fortunately, one small thing can make a really big difference.

#### Homophobia

A major issue that I've noticed in my school, town, and society is the constant, ignorant comment of "You're gay." That shouldn't be used as a term to insult someone! I've never been offended by being called this, but others have. Just the other day, I asked a cousin why he took offense to this. His answer was "Because it's weird." My response was: Why? Tell me what is so wrong with love? As far as I'm seeing, people are telling me it's weird or strange because homosexual people can't reproduce offspring. To that I say that love is caring for someone with meaning beyond friendship. Which includes all forms.

#### **Transphobia**

We also have what is called transphobia. Transphobia is a common fear or hate of someone changing their gender. Except...they're not! They may not have control over their body type, but if they feel that they're male, female, nonbinary, agender, genderfluid, pangender, bigender, etc...that's who they are! If this hasn't convinced you- let me ask you this: Have you ever heard of gender dysphoria? Don't bother searching it up because I'm about to explain it to you. Gender dysphoria is a kind of depression that comes with being unsatisfied with your gender. The same cousin I asked a question to prior in this article, has always been first to help people with depression. I know plenty of others as well. But you know what doesn't help? People who

### 3 Things That Bother Lilly (Cont.)

continue to encourage gender dysphoria with hurtful comments. Before I move onto the next subject, gender dysphoria has a counterpart. It's called gender euphoria. It's the exact opposite of dysphoria! Imagine making someone's day by using their preferred pronouns, or whatever name brings them joy. Now that sounds a lot better.

#### **Obsessively Overhunting**

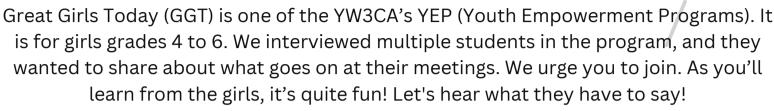
Obsessively overhunting...this is something that I have struggled with for a very long time. Overhunting is when a certain race or species continues to kill off another species without a reason or for their selfish demands. For example, don't you think it's absurd to harm a family of tigers just for a fur coat? What about the makeup you're possibly wearing right now? A lot of the things we see today are gifted to us by our fellow animals here on earth. And no, this is not me telling you to go vegan. In fact, I'm not vegan myself. Humans are omnivores, which means that our diet is based on meat and plants. So I feel fine with taking a little in order to survive- carnivores do that in the wild all the time. But here's the part where the over obsessive element comes in. It's completely normal to feed your family, but it's unnecessary to kill off innocent creatures just for the sake of a coat! Or an exotic soup! Or even makeup. This is an issue that's near impossible to do anything about. Notice how I said near? The smallest things can make a big difference. Spread the word! Make a post on social media! Tell your family and friends and maybe...just maybe...it can help patch the problem.

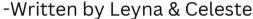
#### Take Action/Conclusion

Today I shared with you three of the problems in your society that could use a change. Homophobia, transphobia, and over obsessive hunting are very global issues. Even though we might not see it now, the smallest speckle of help towards these problems can perhaps create a positive change. As you finish reading this, think about what you and your peers can do to make a difference. Can you send a nice letter to someone suffering gender dysphoria? Can you tell a friend to stop making insults to those part of the LGBTQ+ community? Can you spread the word? Can you make a difference? The answer is yes. Yes you can.

"It's not up to you what others say. But it is up to you, your way of taking action." -Lilly

### **Great Girls Today**







#### What is something you have learned at GGT?

- Learned about period poverty
- Everyone is different
- Different is good
- Don't judge people by their race, gender, etc.
- Making healthy snacks
- Civil rights history

#### How has GGT impacted your life?

- Made Friends
- Enjoy Life More
- Made Life Better
- Break From Stressful Life
- Equality
- Learn new things





#### What do you like best about GGT?

- Arts & crafts
- Cooking & recipes
- The way they take care of you
- Friends
- Treating everyone equally
- Meeting new people

#### A big thank you to everyone we interviewed:

- Laetitia, grade 6
- Qahira, grade 6
- Laila, grade 6
- Saige, grade 4
- Clara, grade 6
- Evalee, grade 4
- Karisa, grade 5
- Symphony
- Journey, grade 5





### Summer of Justice Camp



YW3CA's Summer of Social Justice Camp this past summer was educational while fun at the same time. We learned many different things including things about race, gender, and culture biases. We even learned what it means and what the difference is when you need to communicate with someone who might be speaking from a biased perspective... the difference between calling someone "in" vs. calling someone "out".

We also learned that Justice means everyone gets the same rights. We went on a field trip to the National Liberty Museum and learned about lots of different peaceful conflict heroes like Ghandi and Malala Yousafza.

During our time at YW Summer of Justice we helped with service learning projects and leaned into learning about social justice advocacy work. We discussed the CROWN Act and also learned about period poverty.

We learned about self-image and self-esteem while exploring personal identity. We discussed how we have to have empathy and compassion for all people.

At the end of the camp each camper was given a set of cards with the names of young activists. We campers were tasked with learning and writing about each activist to find ways that we can help own communities too.

Overall YW's Summer of Justice Camp was wonderful and helped us campers improve our understanding of the world around us and inspired us to be upstanders in our own communities.





# Summer of Justice Just Because Poems

Just because I'm quiet, People think that I am rude. But the truth is I am shy.

Just because I'm a woman, People thin that I like to clean. But the truth is I like to go outside and be sporty.



Just because I'm smart,
People think that I am a know-it-all.
But the truth is I still have things to learn.

Just because I'm someone who wears glasses,
People think that I'm a weird nerd.
But the truth is I need glasses to see.



Just because I'm a girl, People think I play with dolls. But the truth is I'd rather play soccer.

Just because I'm a boy, People think that I don't cry. But the truth is I have emotions too.

Just because I'm helpful,

People think that I don't need help.

But the truth is sometimes I can't do everything on my own.

Just because I'm a twin,
People think that we do everything together and that we are the same.
But the truth is I am my own person.

# Fabulous Food

# Classic No-Bake Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars



Are you looking for a fun, easy treat to make for your friend's birthday or bring to a family party? These delicious no-bake bars are an easy way to wow a crowd.

They will be devoured in seconds and leave all your guests begging for the recipe. The best part? You don't even have to use the oven!

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup graham crackers
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar (aka powdered sugar)
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup milk or semi-sweet chocolate chips (or your personal favorite)

#### Materials:

- 8" by 8" baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Food Processor (or Ziplock bag & spoon)
- Small microwave-safe bowl
- Medium-sized mixing bowl
- Measuring cups & spoons
- Rubber or silicone spatula
- Space in your refridgerator

#### Directions:

- 1. Wash your hands.
- 2. Line an 8x8 inch baking pan with parchment paper
- 3. Crush the graham crackers (you can use a food processor or put them in a ziplock back and pound them with the back of a spoon). Set aside.
- 4. Melt the butter in the microwave or on the stove.
- 5. Combine butter, graham crackers, and confectioner's sugar in a medium-sized bowl. Stir in 1 cup of peanut butter.
- 6. Press peanut butter combination into the 8x8 pan. Spread it in an even layer.
- 7. Melt 2 tbsp of peanut butter with the chocolate chips on the stove or in the microwave. Stir until smooth. (Don't forget to taste a few chocolate chips at this step, but make sure you have clean hands!).
- 8. Pour/spread the chocolate mixture evenly over the peanut butter layer.
- 9. Put into the refrigerator for 2 to 24 hours.
- 10. Take the baking pan out and cut into bars. Share & enjoy!

# YOUTH EMPOWERMNET PROGRAMS' PROGRAMS

### GREAT GIRLS TODAY









### **GIRLS IN CHARGE**







### YOUNG WOMEN RISING



### JR. REPORTERS



### STEAM





# YOUTH EMPOWERMNET YOUTH EMPOWERMNET PROGRAMS PROGRAMS PROGRAMS PROGRAMS PROGRAMS PROGRAMS PROGRAMS

### **BOYS TO MEN'TORS**





### YOUNG HEROES, FUTURE LEADERS











### MEN'TORS TO MEN





### **GAME CHANGERS**





### **CHAMPS**









#### YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT

YWCA Tri-County Area, uses a trauma-informed & -responsive lens across all programs and events. Our mission is to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. YW3CA has chosen education as the vehicle by which to fulfill this mission.

YW'3CAs Youth Empowerment Programs have eight full-time staff, all of whom are experienced youth educators working with youth in school and community settings. With over 50 years of combined experience serving youth, the YEP Team is dedicated to providing inclusive and comprehensive social emotional education to youth from preschool to 12th grade and beyond. YEP Team educators provide thoughtfully developed programs that meet the needs of each unique group.

Our educators are trained in and/or certified educators with:

Lakeside Global Institute (Trauma training)
OneCircle Foundation (resiliency and healthy relationships)

ChildLight Educational Company (Yoga)
OneLove Foundation (dating violence prevention)

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

# GIRLS SUMMER CONNECTIONS @ The YW3CA Complex

Self-Care: 6/14

7th-12th Grades 3-5pm 4th-6th Grades 5:30-7:30pm

Schuylkill River Kayak Trip: 6/21

age 14+ 8am-6pm

Pool Party: 7/26

12:30-3:30

**Creative Expressions: 8/12** 

4th-6th Grade 1-3pm 7th-12th Grade 3:30-5:30pm

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

S.T.E.A.M Day

6/3 ~ 11-2pm The YW3CA Complex 724 N Adams St (Rear)

#### Pick Up Garbage Not Guns Community Clean Up

6/10 ~ 11-1pm YWCA Headquarters 300 King St

#### **YEP Open House**

8/15 ~ 6-8pm
The YW3CA Complex
\*sign up for fall programs, meet the YEP
Team, FREE school supplies\*

# BOYS SUMMER CONNECTIONS @The YW3CA Complex

**Men'tors to Men:** 

Wed, 12:30-2:30 June 14-Aug 2

Kayak Trip: 6/29

Sports: 7/7

**College: TBD** 

Pool Party: 7/26 12:30-3:30

#### **SUMMER OF JUSTICE CAMP**

Rising 9th-12th Grade
July 10-13th
The YWCA Complex

Rising 6th-8th Grade
August 7-10th
OJR Middle School

For Summer events information and registration: yep@ywcatricountyarea.org



YWCA IS ON A MISSION...EMPOWER COMMUNITIES!













WWW.YW3CA.ORG