

2015 ZURICH COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARDS



Melissa Sawyer

Co-Founder and Executive Director, Youth Empowerment Project

Melissa is the Co-Founder and the Executive Director of the Youth Empowerment Project. YEP's mission is to engage underserved young people through community-based education, mentoring and employment readiness programs to help them develop skills and strengthen ties to family and community. Over the past eleven years, Melissa has grown YEP to be the largest and most comprehensive organization addressing the needs of underserved, court-involved and out-of-school New Orleans youth. Today, YEP manages an annual budget of over \$3 million and serves over 1,100 youth through eight programs run out of seven service locations.



I have always believed that I have a personal and moral responsibility to use my skills, passion and privilege to help others - especially those who are the most underserved and disadvantaged. I hope that through my life and work, that I can play a small role in making the world a better, kinder and more equitable one."

Gerald M. Williams

Co-Founder and CEO, Directed Initiatives for Youth/Excite! All Stars

Gerald is the Co-Founder and the CEO of Directed Initiatives for Youth/Excite! All Stars. The purpose of Excite! All Stars is to develop and implement an array of quality sport programs which will engage youth in activities which encourage positive behaviors while nurturing their own well-being and promoting their ability to live as self-sufficient adults. Excite! All Stars addresses issues such as service to the community, the ability to resolve conflict, self-confidence, health and wellness, entrepreneurship and teamwork. In 2014, co-founders, Gerald and Penny Williams, along with their team, served over 200 youth ages 6-15 with an active wait list of more than 100 kids.



My mission is to help kids discover and develop the values that define true victory in the game of life. To teach a new generation what it means to play to win. I believe that there is inherent greatness in every child and my job is to help them find that greatness, nurture it, and then give it away."

