

Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County points youth to a bright future at Y4

On April 27, Candice Fredrick took the stage to tell her story at the Y4 Youth Resource Event hosted by the County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board. Y4 stands for "Why Youth? Why wait? Why now? Why not? Because the next generation is already here!" It is an event for at-risk youth to celebrate launching careers and advancing their education.

Born to a family of eight, Candice has lived through foster care, homelessness, abuse and has recently become a single mother. With the dream of a career in nursing, Candice chose to leave her past behind and pursue a bright future. With help from the Workforce Investment Board's year-round youth employment program, today she is on her way to becoming a registered nurse.

Candice's story shares a common thread with the more than 400 Inland Empire youth bussed to Y4 from across the county. Like Candice, many Y4 participants face a lack of support and education. Unaware of the numerous opportunities and resources available, these hurdles often lead at-risk youth to settle for an unfulfilling, low-wage job.

Fortunately for Candice and many others, the County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board's year-round youth employment program provides career training and education. Y4 helps youth discover a passion and future career by delivering informa-

tion about prospects after high school graduation. At the event, soft skills workshops, talks by Monster.com and regional business leaders, and inspirational presentations informed attendees about available jobs, training and education options.

In the "Where Are They Now" segment, participants heard from Candice and four other youth who have faced similar challenges and overcome the odds. These youth shared stories of rising above homelessness, abuse, and depression to secure training, start careers, and even purchase a car or rent a first apartment. Each discussed how this was possible with hard work and resources provided by the year-round youth employment program.

Candice shared, "Throughout the program, I could see how my skills were being built. I learned how to dress professionally, how to talk to people, and how to build my resume. It helped me get a start. I wanted to be a registered nurse, but I didn't have the money." She continued, "The County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board gave me the chance to join a certified nursing program that has helped me get on the career path to being a registered nurse."

Included in the event was a presentation of the song "I Am" written by California singer/songwriter duo, Juliet & Easy, specifically for Y4. The song was inspired by the experiences of six Y4 participants and can be downloaded at www.myiamsong.com.

Workforce Investment Board Vice Chair Tony Myrell inspired the youth in attendance with his story. He built his company, Premier Ambulance Transportation, from scratch and now employs more than 220 people. "Through hard work and persistence, anyone can create an opportunity for themselves to be successful," he said. His personal mantra "if it is to be, it is up to me," inspired several students to thank him after he spoke.

Another highlight of Y4 was a job and resource fair for attending youth. Industry professionals were on hand to offer career advice and answers for interested youth. Attending employers included SMS Security, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Allied Barton Security Service, California Steel Industries, Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites Ontario Airport, Childcare Careers, Monster.com, County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board and Premier Medical Transportation.

After the job fair, students gathered for a final address and then boarded buses to return home. Many left with a fresh perspective and hope for the future. They echoed Candice's sentiments, "It's hard for me because I'm a single mom. But I'm going to make it because I know I always have Workforce Investment Board's support and I know that I'm equipped with the skills I need to find and keep a job."





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Hundreds of youth took part in the Y4 Youth Resource Event hosted by the County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board on April 27.