

## CELEBRATE 2012 TOP CHAMPIONS

**Pamela McBride** | Youth Engagement Consultant, Twin Cities, Minnesota



Pam McBride and friends.

The approach to “youth work” has changed for the better in Minnesota thanks to the enthusiasm and talents of ToP Champion, **Pam McBride**. Pam’s passion and dedication is well-known in the metro youth development and youth engagement community. For the last 15 years, her foundational belief has been that the voice of youth is important for us all and critical for our shared futures. Her collaborative approach has grown into what is now called the Youth as Facilitative Leader (YFL) movement.

Pam has held a number of leadership positions focused on innovation in this space. Below are some key projects and appreciations shared from her colleagues:

**What’s Up Youth Info Line.** Staff Lead (1999-2000)  
Young people designed and implemented a telephone helpline with ToP methods using pink

and neon “sticky walls” and torn classified ads as half sheets. This youth group trained in ToP went on to train the YFL curriculum at Jerry Gamble Boys & Girls Club. Included in that group were Evan Barnett, Tami Thornton, and Veda Partalo. The YFL methods were used to plan and implement a large youth conference at the Boys and Girls Club. It was the boys and girls who facilitated and the adults who participated!

**Yo the Movement.** Director (2002)  
YFL methods were used to plan five Hip Hop festivals that included Toki Wright, Claire Redmond, and Franzdiego DaHinten. Youth facilitators led workshops to educate young people of the roots and power of the Hip Hop movement.

**Minneapolis Beacons Network.**  
Youth Engagement Consultant (2006)  
Pam mentored youth staff and alumni trained in facilitation methods to plan camp design programming around everything Beacons! Currently there are 12 Beacons Centers, each with a Program Quality Team that rely on YFL methods.

*“Not only have we built the capacity of our youth and staff to be more effective facilitators using the ICA methods that Pam introduced, we have transformed our culture to be more participatory, more reflective, and more effective. We have been able to give youth and adults the tools to authentically partner with one another and with their communities. I give much of the credit for the transformation in our culture to the ways we have deeply integrated the methods (Focused Conversation, Consensus Workshop, etc.) into our processes for planning with diverse stakeholders, practicing youth work, and reflecting on our practice.”*

- Jenny Collins, Director,  
Minneapolis Beacons Network



**Minneapolis Youth Congress.** Creator (2007)  
Each year more than 50 young people come together to learn the YFL methods. They put their learning into practice and demonstrate their facilitative skills at a city-wide convention as part of their training. The young facilitators have also partnered with the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). They brought together young people living in the zone for a facilitated session to determine youth needs, and action steps NAZ could take to deliver on those needs.

*“A really important thing I've learned from Pam over these three years, is not being afraid to take risks professionally. With the proper preparation and guidance from Pam speaking in front of varying audiences has become a bit easier.*

*Our organization Minneapolis Youth Congress is different because of Pam's training and role modeling in these ways:*

- 1. Pam passes the baton of leadership, providing opportunities for both personal and professional development for coordinators and youth congress members' alike.*
- 2. Pam has been able to create an environment where young people are valued not only for their individual human capital, but also their individual lived experiences which bring new lenses to many of the issues we work on.*
- 3. Pam values young people period, no matter where they come from or where they have been. I think because of this Pam sees the potential in others that they sometimes cannot see themselves.*
- 4. Pam has created an environment within the Minneapolis Youth Congress where there exists true partnership between the adults and young people who work together. Which allows young people to see themselves as integral to the decision-making process.”*

- LaToya Balogun

*“A really important thing I've learned from Pam over these last 12 years is to trust in the process and to authentically engage youth and intentionally incorporate youth voice. The Minneapolis Youth Congress is different because Pam really believes in our youth and has high expectations*

*for them to be able to deliver. She is a champion for youth voice and uses the participatory facilitation process to magnify their voice and develop our young people to perform above and beyond what is expected of them.”*

- Evan Barnett

Other projects from 2007 to the present include:

- **PeaceJam.** Used YFL to plan, design, and facilitate community-wide service projects in three communities in the Metro area;
- **YMCA USA.** Addressed issue of looming achievement gaps, using Focused Conversation as the key tool;
- **Youth Work Institute-University of MN.** Focused on improving program quality with organizations that work with young people.

Going forward, Pam will continue to build on the cadre of youth leaders who will learn to lead conversations with peers and elected officials. She also plans to use and engage youth program quality teams to engage youth people as leaders and learners.

MNTOP extends its congratulations to Pam and the youth engagement community, and looks forward to seeing continued success from your work together! ■