

**Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Summer Internship Program (YEC):
A Hands-on Environmental Justice Focused Farming Program at the High School Level**

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“When you work with the soil, your hands speak to the cosmos.”

Dr. Vandana Shiva

“The pleasure of teaching is an act of resistance countering the overwhelming boredom, uninterest, and apathy that so often characterize the way professors and students feel about teaching and learning, about the classroom experience.”

bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

For Priscilla Bassett, co-leader of YEC

I'll always remember eating fruit in the van with you and laughing until it hurt

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Abstract

YEC's main goal was to open dialogue with high school students from under resourced communities about environmental injustices and to create and explore positive alternatives. The summer program, which was funded by the 2010 Davis Projects for Peace and the Pomona College Summer Undergraduate Research Project Award, included a group of 11 high school students from Pomona, Montclair, La Puente, and Chino Hills, CA. The students were paid to participate in the program for 6 weeks in the summer of 2010, five days a week, for 30 hours each week. The program was designed to consistently connect movements for food and environmental justice with the farming work that we did. Priscilla Bassett and I led this program in partnership. Priscilla is a student at Scripps College, where she pursues a major in Environmental Analysis with a focus on race, class, and gender.

This paper includes many sections. First, it briefly outlines and defines environmental injustice, food injustice, the industrial food system, the Inland Empire, and systems of domination and oppression as issues which motivated the creation of YEC. I then discuss my positionality as a white, class privileged, educated, man working with Priscilla, a black woman, and predominantly first generation low-income high school students of color. After this, I discuss how and why the work of bell hooks, Pablo Freire, and the Food Project was influential as Priscilla and I formed a teaching style. Then, I briefly I talk about the grant writing process for YEC and I outline the process by which Priscilla and I recruited and selected the interns we worked with. I summarize the program's activities day by and then include responses to surveys which the YEC interns completed on a weekly basis. I use the results of these surveys to suggest that experiential urban farming programs at the high school level can connect high school students with issues of environmentalism and social justice and can motivate them to take action

against the industrial food system and the environmental injustices they see and experience around them.

YEC in Context of Critical Issues

YEC was created in response to a number of issues. First, environmental injustice, whereby residents of low income areas, people of color, and people of developing nations experience inequitable distributions of environmental burdens, is spreading. In addition, many residents of low income areas experience food injustice because they have limited access to affordable, culturally appropriate fresh produce. These two injustices occur within an industrial food system which degrades the soil, poisons waterways, pollutes the oceans, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, mistreats animals, exploits farm workers, and produces overly processed unhealthy foods. Specifically, in the Inland Empire CA, residents must cope with environmental injustice, food injustice, and the prevalence of the industrial food system all while navigating through a concrete landscape, with limited access to safe green space. More broadly, it is important to keep in mind that in the United States, all of these problems occur as we realize the failure of the public education system (see Davis), the earth's unfolding climate uncertainty (see Giradet), the government's two foreign wars (see Hanson), and the fact that residents of the United States of America are on stolen land (see Zinn). I do not mean to suggest that a six week, hands-on farming experiential program for high school students can adequately address and solve all of these problems overnight. However, as described in the overview of daily activities section, the program did raise awareness about these issues and did offer the high school students some tools to address these injustices.

One motivating factor for the development of the YEC program was the knowledge that the prevalence of environmental injustice is overwhelming. Anti urban attitudes, covert or internalized racism, and attitudes in favor of supporting the interests of big business have been critical barriers to protecting low income populations and communities of color from an unequal exposure to environmental harms (Collin and Collin, 2009). To name a few, these harms manifest themselves in the form of air pollution, exposure to toxic chemicals in the water, and proximity to trash dumps, landfills, and major roadways. In addition, this denial of access to healthy living often occurs while those most negatively affected by pollution are denied access to decision making processes (see Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit). In addition, mainstream environmentalists often have a limited view of environmental protection, prioritizing the fight against pollution to the air, water, and land, while neglecting public health indicators (Taylor, 38). “This vision shaped the form of current environmental protection agencies, creating artificial barriers to protection with racist and antiurban consequences” (Collins and Collins, 210). Even among communities who fight for the rights of our Mother Earth, there is a neglect on the basis of race, class, and gender for people who are most affected by environmental harms and most unable to access decision making processes. This serves to perpetuate environmental injustices and deny environmental justice, which “embraces the principle that all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental and public health laws and regulations” (Bullard, 493).

In addition to responding to environmental injustice, the YEC program was also conceived as a necessary response to food injustice, which denies people access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods on the basis of income, race, and location. Supermarkets which offer a wide range of nutritious foods are often absent in inner cities, and

the stores which are accessible often only offer unhealthy foods at higher prices than in suburban or affluent communities (see Pothukuchi). Markets which do offer wholesome foods are often outside of inner cities and therefore inaccessible, because vehicle ownership is often lower than average among inner city residents and because buses travel slowly and bus lines often do not correspond with supermarket locations (see Prevention Institute for the Center for Health Improvement). Food access inequities also occur in rural areas, where residents often pay higher prices for low quality food. These disparities in access to nourishing foods perpetuate childhood obesity, heart disease, and early onset diabetes, three public health epidemics which disproportionately affect low income populations and communities of color (see Flournoy and Treuhaft).

The industrial food system, another problem in the United States of America which YEC responds to, interlocks into the system which denies food justice to communities on the basis of race, class, and location. This system produces highly processed, calorie rich “edible foodlike substances” (Pollan, in *Food Inc.*) at extremely low prices which do not reflect the true costs of the production of these goods. The industrial food system produces and markets monumental quantities of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt by degrading the fertility of the land, polluting waterways, contributing to global warming, excluding small farmers, exploiting farm laborers, and using fossil fuels to make fertilizer, to power farm equipment, and to transport goods (see Schlosser). The industrial food system has created and reinforced the American public health crisis (see Pollan, “Big Food”). It is a complicated and destructive system which brings food to consumers from unknown locations and separates people from the food they eat and the land on which it was produced.

Priscilla and I deliberately chose to lead the YEC program in the Inland Empire, and specifically Pomona, CA as opposed to other American cities. By comparing Pomona's agricultural history to the current Inland Empire environment, the urgency of the YEC program becomes clear. From the late 1800s through the end of the 1940s, the Pomona Valley was dominated by agriculture, consisting mostly of large citrus groves, orchards, and subsistence farms (Comet, 53-67). However, in the second half of the 20th century during the post war boom, orchards, groves, and farms disappeared. These growing sites could not compete with the housing boom, increased property taxes, changes in zoning, road and highway construction, and high levels of pollution, which increased smog and decreased yield by as much as 75% or more (Comet, 67). From 1984 to 2006, over 18,000 acres of farmland was lost in Los Angeles County (Comet, 69). Unfortunately, this loss in farmland has been matched by a loss in generational agrarian knowledge. Even though there is great potential to produce food in the Pomona Valley because its climate can support vegetable and fruit crop production throughout the year, general knowledge about how to produce these crops no longer exists and urban developments dominate once arable land and destroy the possibilities of urban communal growing spaces.

The formation of the YEC program in the Pomona Valley is appropriate not only as a response to this history, but also in response to the fact that the problems of environmental injustice, food injustice, and industrial food system have emerged and collided in the Pomona Valley and the Inland Empire, CA. Residents of Pomona navigate through a concrete landscape dominated by streets, cars, highways, and diesel trucks carrying goods from the Los Angeles ports to the inland warehouses (see Eventov). Therefore, residents breathe air polluted by high levels of particulate matter in the air which contributes to lung disease (see Kirshner). Fast food

restaurants, shopping centers, and parking lots thrive in the sprawling nature of this region (see Hayden).

It is also important to highlight that YEC functions in a society which perpetuates white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy (see “Cultural Criticism”). The legacy of colonialism has been to define people as superior or inferior to each other based upon artificial constructs which humans project onto each other and themselves. In this way, people of a certain skin color, gender, income level, or sexual orientation are made to seem superior or inferior to each other. The system of oppression and domination observed today demonstrate the resilience and power of dominant culture’s definitions and its ability to penetrate minds and shape values.

By outlining all of these overwhelming issues and by saying that the YEC program is an appropriate response, I do not mean to say that small scale hands-on farming alternative education curricula geared towards high school students can solve these issues. However, by connecting urban high school youth from environmental justice communities with these issues through discussion and by spending time at urban farms, the youth may begin to question the world they live in and explore positive alternatives. It is true that education cannot solve the problems outlined above alone in order to effectively combat environmental injustice, food injustice, the industrial food system, and sprawl. By briefly outlining the negative societal effects of these issues in a paper which attempts to persuade readers of the benefits of expanding hands-on farming environmental justice oriented programming for high school students I do not intend to suggest that these programs are the only solution – quite the opposite. Urban farming programming for young people is just one of the many necessary elements in a broad movement for social change.

In order for YEC to do its part in helping people to lead happy and healthy lives, YEC can occur in partnership with many movements. Societal interventions in public policy, land use management, supermarket location, corporate marketing strategies, national farm bill legislation, and race relations, to name just a few, are a part of this movement. As such, YEC is allied with anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movements, movements for Queer rights, liberation struggles, movements to fight against genetically modified seeds, the anti war movement, feminist movements, the green energy movement, the slow foods movement, the movement for the rights of undocumented students, the eco-socialist movement, the movement for the rights of farm workers and the list goes on. YEC is connected to all these movements in its understanding that the current system is not working, that the current system does not allow all people to live equally, that the current system is leading us down a treacherous path. Giving high school students the tools to grow their own food and understand the system which creates environmental injustice is a form of resistance in a much larger movement.

Positionality

Throughout the planning phase and during the six weeks of the YEC program, it was impossible to avoid issues of race, class, and gender. I originally did not plan on discussing these issues for this senior thesis exercise, as they are very difficult to discuss in a society which tells us to never talk about money, race, religion, or gender. However, it is impossible to run from these issues, or to hide behind the institutions which perpetuate patriarchy, white supremacy, and economic inequity. To silence these issues in this paper, to pretend that they did not pose problems throughout the YEC program, would only function to perpetuate the oppression which I am committed to demolishing. Ida B. Wells talks about this idea, that to remain silent is to

perpetuate oppressive forces, in *Southern Horrors*, as she describes how remaining silent in response to lynch law only works to reinforce the actions of the lynch mob: “Men who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage. They do not see that by their tacit encouragement, their silent acquiescence, the black shadow of lawlessness in the form of lynch law is spreading its wings over the whole country” (Wells, 30).

It is necessary for me to discuss how my commitment to social and environmental justice works within my positionality as a white, Jewish, class privileged man working primarily with first generation students of color and my co-leader and working partner Priscilla, a black woman. It has been important for me to realize how I fit into struggles for social justice working with people who do not look like me or share the same experiences as me. While I can run away from these issues whenever I want, others do not have this privilege. As Sally Belfrage recounts her experience as a white civil rights activist, she writes, “Implicit in the songs, tears, speeches, work and laughter was knowledge, secure in both them and us, that ultimately we could return to a white refuge. The struggle was their life sentence, implanted in their pigment, and ours only so long as we cared to identify...” I believe that even though I am not beaten on the basis of the color of my skin, for example, the systems of oppression which allow this racism to thrive oppress me because I am Queer. Therefore, I have no refuge where I can hide and no choice but to fight. This summer I started on a lifelong journey of self-exploration and critical inquiry which was reinforced by many difficult situations and conversations with Priscilla, the YEC interns, and our various community partners. I must give credit to the majority of my realizations about how dominance and power function to conversations I had with Priscilla throughout the summer.

By making the connection that systems of domination affect us all, I could work with the interns and Priscilla even though we have had different experiences because I recognized that we were all working against a common enemy. In the context of the YEC program, I, along with predominantly first generation Mexican high school students and Priscilla, owned the struggle to battle environmental injustice and food injustice because the creation of environmental and food justice necessitates the breakdown of all interlocking systems of domination and oppression (hooks, "Cultural Criticism"). This understanding reinforces my call to remain critical, for as Ida B. Wells says, if I choose to overlook the root causes of social inequality, then I become predisposed to perpetuate the system which also oppresses me. It is important to note here about the limitations of a 6 week urban farming program to liberate its participants - it would be impossible to break down all systems of domination in six weeks with just 13 people. We did, however, begin the process of questioning and observation which is necessary in the fight against these systems.

It is problematic that the above description of my positionality makes it seem as if there were never any conflicts, that the program progressed smoothly, and that my difference in experience did not interfere with the daily flow of activities. For example, I could offer no substantive advice or relate to the interns as they discussed their pregnant friends, pressure to join the army, growing up homeless, or having siblings in jail. My difference in experience and skin color also meant that some of the interns may not have been comfortable being honest with me or confiding in me for advice. My status as male meant that some of our community partners valued my ability to lead the group over Priscilla's ability. Looking back, I did not see how systems of white supremacy function in the documentaries which we showed to the interns.

There were often times when I was learning with the interns from Priscilla about the necessity to not just be racist, but to strive to be an anti-racist.

Forming a Teaching Style - Influential Authors

We relied upon a number of readings to prepare to take on the role of teachers. Selections from Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and the Food Project helped me and Priscilla to create our own unique pedagogy, formulate a curriculum, understand how to build a strong and safe community, and help understand how to teach as openly as possible.

Priscilla and I went to the library and checked out about thirty books about critical pedagogy, multicultural education, building with adobe, and survival guides for high school teachers. We each took home about fifteen books. Many of the ones I had were not helpful – they were either not applicable to YEC, too dense, or focused on scholarly research. In fact, bell hooks negates all of these books we got about how to be good teachers, such as the survival guides. She writes, “Even though I share strategies, these works do not offer blueprints for ways to make the classroom an exciting place for learning. To do so would undermine the insistence that engaged pedagogy recognize each classroom as different, that strategies must constantly be changed, invented, reconceptualized to address each new teaching experience” (hooks, “Teaching,” 10-11)

First, we greatly appreciated reading the second chapter of *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. This reading helped us to envision the kind of leaders, facilitators, and teachers who we wanted to become, and helped us throughout the program to reform ourselves to Freire’s ideal. In the chapter we read, Freire offers both a description of the kind of

teachers we did not want to be and the teachers we knew we must become. This reading was not only informational but comforting; it offers advice not only on how to teach, but how to interact with all people by rejecting the assumption that peers and students have no prior knowledge or experience.

Freire begins the chapter by talking about the failures of the typical dynamic which remains unquestioned between teachers and students. For me, describing this dynamic was useful because it showed me what I must avoid. Sometimes it is hard to envision the kind of person I want to become, and instead it is easier to know the person who I don't want to be. In this respect, Freire showed me that I could not be an educational banker. He writes that traditional teaching is fundamentally narrative. The teacher's "task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration – contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance" (Freire, 57). The student mindlessly and mechanically repeats, memorizes, and records phrases given to him/her by the teacher without understanding any true meaning. Educational narration therefore turns students "into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher (Freire, 58). The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 58) Here, education is an act of banking and there is no opportunity for creativity, critical thinking, transformation, or knowledge.

In addition, Freire writes that the teachers of the banking process assume that students are completely ignorant: "Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry" (Freire, 58).

Just as an oppressor, the teacher considers the students' ignorance to be absolute. There is no opportunity for creativity in the banking system and they do not see themselves as change makers. Banking teachers serve only to dehumanize, and these students will soon realize the oppressive banking efforts and seek to rebel. The need to reject the projection of ignorance onto others guided my facilitation throughout the program. I was interested in what the interns thought and always encouraged them to share their opinions with the group. Reflecting back on the program, Priscilla and I did serve to bank information in the interns' minds. However, it was the interns themselves who did the banking through self-realization of the issues we discussed. Further, because they were not tested on the topics covered, they were able to form a hierarchy of the topics that were most important to them, meaning that they will remember most vividly the issues that they prioritized for themselves.

Freire's philosophy on teaching also made me reconsider and challenge the teacher / student dichotomy. He writes, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students" (Freire, 59). This idea was a driving force to give the interns the power to form their own curriculum. By surveying the interns each week and asking them what they liked and disliked, they served to shape their curriculum as the program progressed. Freire also describes the characteristics of the 'humanist teacher,' and says that "The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings' for themselves" (Freire, 61). This idea was central in curriculum development. The ultimate goal of the curriculum, informed by Freire, was for the students to see themselves as changemakers. We rejected the traditional classroom environment, where students are not exposed to issues of social justice and do not have the chance to explore positive alternatives.

During the program, the interns questioned the world they see around them in response to movies we watched and related discussions. This questioning is a part of the pedagogy which Freire calls problem posing education. He says that teachers “must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world” (Freire, 66). He writes that teachers must present problems to students and see how they react. This tactic was useful. For example, the interns became angry that big business is often held unaccountable for environmental contamination and demanded strict government enforcement of regulations. “In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation...the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world” (Freire, 70-71). As facilitators, Priscilla and I were motivated by this ideology. By showing the interns that they were capable farmers and thinkers, they began to see themselves as capable of action and as capable and committed change makers.

Freire also writes about the necessity to combine thought with action and theory with practice. He writes “Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible” (Freire, 64). Freire’s call to action that pedagogy must include active engagement was a driving force of the design of YEC. None of the topics we discussed as a group were theoretical, instead we always discussed possible solutions to the problems we considered. Again, Freire’s thinking informed the avoidance of the theoretical: “Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question,

the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed” (Freire, 69). The interns gave meaning to their manual labor through discussion and their work became more and more valued as the program progressed because they began to understand their work and its place within the curriculum.

Freire also describes a critical intervention in reality. “Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality” (Freire, 68). This idea gives strong power to simple acts such as pulling weeds or setting up irrigation tape. In this respect, Priscilla and I always asked the interns to remind themselves why the manual labor they performed was relevant, or, in other words, why is it a critical intervention in reality?

bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* also informed the design and pedagogical ideology of YEC. The book’s stated purpose is that it serves to “emphasize that the pleasure of teaching is an act of resistance countering the overwhelming boredom, uninterest, and apathy that so often characterize the way professors and students feel about teaching and learning, about the classroom experience” (hooks, 10). By combining theory with practice and learning through hands on training, I realize that we, the YEC community, rebelled and became free through knowledge. Her writing offered many pieces of good advice which I appreciated throughout the program. Whereas Freire’s work offered more of a broad pedagogical ideology to be followed, hooks’ work was valuable because it offered many different pieces of seemingly isolated advice. However, I realized that each piece of advice does

not exist in isolation; taken together, it formed the foundation of a strong program where we became a community.

hooks begins her work by acknowledging that fostering excitement in the classroom cannot happen if the teacher sees the agenda as completely rigid. She writes, “Excitement could not be generated without a full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices. Agendas had to be flexible, had to allow for spontaneous shifts in direction” (hooks, 7). This was often true during YEC. Most nights Priscilla and I would outline the next day’s activities. We often wrote down times for each new activity to start and end. However, the days never once followed the schedule we had planned. We always had to be flexible and let the group flow naturally. hooks’ idea that rigidity must be avoided and that fluidity is to be assumed was comforting during those times when we had to rethink the entire day in a moment’s notice.

hooks’ writing also demonstrated to me that classroom dynamics must be addressed and re-defined; she emphasizes the importance of building a community which breaks the assumption of common experience. hooks writes, “Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone’s presence is acknowledged” (hooks, 8). This opened my eyes to the fact that as a teacher, I must genuinely value everyone’s presence. But this understanding goes a step deeper: there must also be a deconstruction of the traditional notion that only the professor is responsible for classroom dynamics. In response to this idea, bell hooks says, “making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy” (hooks, 39). In order to create an inclusive environment as a teacher and facilitator, I need to

express interest in the voices of all the interns, to actively seek out the knowledge they have to give. “It has been my experience that one way to build community in the classroom is to recognize the value of each individual voice.” Because of these ideas, we often opened a space for the interns to make free word associations about a term which we would write on the board. This free word association pushed the interns to reach down into their memories and past experiences to share their beliefs and come to their own conclusions.

hooks writing was also useful because it made me realize that it was necessary for me as a facilitator not only to encourage the students to share their own experiences, but for me to talk about my own. Showing the interns that I am comfortable being candid with them will encourage them to open up and be honest, while undoing the potential for me to become authoritarian. “Professors who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive.” Hooks writes, “In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share” (hooks, 21). Revealing certain aspects of my identity will make me vulnerable. However, hooks writes that for me to take the first risk can enhance community in the classroom. “When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators. It is often productive if professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material” (hooks, 21). These ideas pushed me throughout the program to be open and honest.

hooks also offers inspiration when she echoes Freire’s call for the combination of theory with practice, which hooks calls praxis. She writes, “It always astounds me when progressive

people act as though it is somehow a naïve moral position to believe that our lives must be a living example of our politics” (hooks, 48). Her belief that there is a necessity to verify in praxis what we know in consciousness gives me hope (hooks, 47). hooks continues by quoting Freire: “Men and women are human beings because they are historically constituted as beings of praxis, and in the process they have become capable of transforming the world – of giving it meaning” (hooks, 48). By working with the interns to become manifestations of our political beliefs through meaningful work, we transformed the world and gave it meaning. We could only have done this by putting into action the words that we preached.

Lastly, hooks provided reassurance for me. At times throughout the program, I felt as if I was indoctrinating the interns with ideas and beliefs. I came to see myself as a brainwasher to orient the interns to my politics. hooks writing provided a context to become comfortable with this worry. She writes, “Commitment to engaged pedagogy carries with it the willingness to be responsible, not to pretend that professors do not have the power to change the direction of our students’ lives” (hooks, 206).

We were overwhelmingly unsuccessful in looking for books specifically about forming hands-on farming summer programs for high school students. Few organizations or authors have written extensive guides on this topic. However, the Food Project, based in Boston, Massachusetts, offers two books which directly influenced daily activities throughout the summer. One of the books, called *French Fries and the Food System*, is full of activities to effectively teach about conventional vs. local food systems and how to teach about how to work on a successful farm. The other, called *Growing Together*, is full of activities and workshops that help to build community among participants and strengthen bonds to create a space where

everyone feels comfortable and open. The advice and perspective provided by Freire and hooks always influenced our adaptation of the activities from these two books.

French Fries and the Food System: a year-round curriculum connecting youth with farming and food was extremely useful because its activities work towards youth empowerment. The activities address difficult issues surrounding the industrial food system and environmental degradation in a way which becomes accessible to high school students. The book “is the culmination of years spent figuring out how to best help our young people understand the intricacies of our food and farming systems...[it does] the tough but vital work of translating agriculture into the language of young people.” The book’s activities helped us as facilitators provide the tools and voice for the interns to think critically about the current global food system and envision change and how they can be a part of it. It provides a space for the interns to formulate their own opinions.

During the program, we used four of the the book’s activities, which use “the daily reality of teens (fast food, sneakers, social issues) as an entryway to talk about farming and the food system.” I appreciate the Food Project’s publication because its activities attempt to instill in students a love for the land, and a confidence that they can become activists to make change. This publication is a vital tool to connect broad movements for sustainable agriculture which often exist in isolation. Through this manual, teens throughout the country have access to ideas which disrupt conventional ways of thinking about food and agriculture and therefore the book becomes a powerful tool to fight the system. From this book four activities were especially useful to us. We used ‘Garden Sensory Observations,’ ‘Compost Family Feud,’ ‘Trace the French Fry,’ and ‘Getting to Know a Seed Catalog.’

The Food Project's other manual, called *Growing Together: a guide for building inspired, diverse, and productive youth communities* provided ice breaker activities, games, and workshops which helped YEC become a cohesive community in collaboration. The manual clearly states its purpose in the beginning: "We design activities for group interaction, set high standards, teach communication techniques, play games designed to elicit both laughter and learning, facilitate workshops that explore critical social issues, and encourage discussions that let youth learn about themselves and others." In the YEC program, we adopted these concepts and combined them with an atmosphere which welcomes interns to challenge systems of oppression and domination. The manual also supported the pedagogy of YEC which motivated interns to consider why the work they did was relevant to their lives. Similar to hook's idea of praxis, the manual states, "At the Food Project, we try not to push people to the point of despair. We want to make people aware of social problems but also generate hope and new approaches to these problems. Too often, inquiries into social or environmental issues leave people paralyzed by guilt or horror. We think carefully about how to carry a group across the 'bridge' from despair to action."

Growing Together provided extremely powerful tools to inform our teaching strategies and offers valuable advice about how to encourage participation from all members of the group during discussions and activities. First, the manual advocates brainstorming and free associating. "brainstorming is an equalizer: everyone participates, all well-intended comments are recognized, and people can share their ideas regardless of their writing ability." Before screening a movie, we often started a brainstorming session to generate energy and introduce the interns to the topic of the film. I was often surprised at the direction the brainstorming sessions went, because the interns were often more critical than I expected them to be. In brainstorming, we

encouraged quantity of comments over quality. Free associating was also a valuable teaching method: “It is low risk for participants because they are not asked to speak at length about a topic – just to call out words. However, getting the most out of this method requires good facilitation. The technique works best when you know where you generally want to take the conversation.” The free association method also allowed the interns to build and feed off of each other, they came to realizations as more words were added to the board.

Growing Together also offers methods to encourage participation from all members of the group. The manual recognizes that quiet students “often say that they feel their point does not matter, that someone else has already mentioned their idea, that they’re embarrassed or afraid to speak, and that the conversation goes so quickly that they don’t have enough time to formulate an idea.” Trying to deal with this dynamic would have been difficult if I had not considered some of the tools which *Growing Together* offers to encourage participation from all members of the group. We employed the ‘go around’ format, in which everyone speaks one at a time around the circle. We also allowed silence between comments, which helps those who need time to formulate ideas. As a facilitator, it was also useful to read the physical reactions of the interns. If they seemed confused, angry, excited I would always ask them to share their thoughts.

Informed by the Food Project manual *Growing Together*, we also asked why? why? why? Asking the interns to continue to answer their own questions leads them to the root cause of the issues we considered as a group. This method also breaks down the notion that teachers are all knowing and students are empty receptacles to be filled. “This simple method can open up new levels of insight for individuals and groups that is difficult to reach in other ways. This method makes the participants the real actors intellectually and keeps staff in the role of coach and questioner.” Asking why why why allowed the interns to realize that they could answer their

own questions, that they could understand for themselves the systems of domination and oppression that create environmental injustice and environmental degradation.

The fact that Priscilla and I are already motivated inspired the interns themselves to get excited about the curriculum and our work. However, the Food Project *Growing Together* manual offered additional tools to inspire motivation in the interns. One of the most important pieces of advice the manual offers to keep motivation levels high is organization. “Keep the group members organized as they plunge into their project. Sloppy organization may cause them to assume that you don’t value their time and energy, and this can start the project off on a sour note.” It was also useful for us to remind the interns about how much work that we completed as a group. Before we would begin weeding a bed or clearing a row to plant, we would tell them to take a look at the ground before the start of the project. At the end of the project, we would always step back and remember how the site used to look, which would motivate us with the knowledge of how much work we can get done. It was also valuable for Priscilla and I to work just as hard as the interns for them to stay motivated. In addition, we always made sure that there was enough work for everybody. “Motivation plummets when people suspect they are not needed or that the task does not require their full effort.”

We used this book as a guide, and did not utilize the majority of its recommendations. For example, the book says that the ‘Straight Talk’ method of discipline is required. However, this method assumes that students will be uncooperative, will challenge authority, and be apathetic towards work. We decided to trust the interns and their ability to work hard; straight talk was never necessary for YEC.

Grant Writing

During Christmas break in early January 2010 Priscilla and I began writing a grant proposal to the Davis Projects for Peace Foundation, a \$10,000 prize given to undergraduate students at liberal arts colleges throughout the U.S.A. We looked at previously funded grant proposals, especially the proposal written by Ashwin Balikrishnan, Patricia Nguen, and Jake Cohen, on the Davis Foundation website to get ideas about how to structure ours. We decided to brainstorm ideas and come back to each other with a concrete set of items to write into the grant. The next week, we produced a first draft and after that, we gave the draft to many different mentors and friends to read over. We received input and advice from Draper Center Educational Outreach Coordinator Sergio Marin, Pomona College alum Paul Ort, Pomona College writing center fellow Sara Kendall, Pomona College Organic Farm Manager Juan Araya, and Professor of Environmental Analysis Char Miller. Input from Eduardo Casarez, the farmer whom Priscilla and I had worked for at the Earthworks Community Farm in South El Monte, was especially influential. Eddie had just formed the Cuatro Caminos Collective, which works to promote meaningful work, appropriate technology, intergenerational cross cultural knowledge transfers, and wholesome local food. The four ideas which Eddie shared with us formed the basis of the YEC program in the grant writing process. After receiving input from our various friends and mentors, Priscilla and I sat down together for a series of in depth revising sessions. By February first, we had considered every single word of the grant, painstakingly removing words, shifting paragraphs, and widening margins. When we found out that we were selected as the recipients of the Davis award, we began work immediately.

Outreach

Priscilla and I focused immediately on the issue of recruiting students: without them, there would be no program. We began to contact several local leaders and organizations which worked with high school students. Beginning from the premise that mainstream environmentalism and sustainable farming has been inaccessible to communities of color and young people (see Taylor), it was our goal to recruit students from under resourced communities in the Inland Empire who did not necessarily have any previous exposure or opportunities to explore environmental stewardship. We focused on recruiting students in low-income neighborhoods where household income may limit access to healthy food, and where local food stores which sell a full range of nutritious foods are scarcer than in affluent communities. In our recruitment process we strove to establish trusting relationships with local leaders and organizations in the hopes that they would spread the word about our program. We started by talking with Maria Tucker and Sergio Marin of the Draper Center for Community Partnerships to form a list of contacts. From this list, we reached out to Fremont Middle School Principle Elizabeth Harper, Earth Club leader Paul Martinez at Montclair High school, Cindy Caratachea and Claudia Ruelas at Pomona High School, and Ali Hangan, coordinator of the Youth Scholars Network. We also met with Carlos Carrillo of Uncommon Good, Tessa Hicks Pitzer College's Community Engagement Center, representatives of the Ohlone Tribe, the Asian American Resource Center, and the Upward Bound Program at Harvey Mudd College. We gave presentations in which we summarized the planned activities for the program and talked about how interns would learn to grow food, go on field trips to farms, cook the food they harvested, and participate in discussions about environmental issues.

In April, Mr. Carillo invited Priscilla and I to attend a meeting to provide space for local families interested in urban agriculture to get together. There, we met Tessa Hicks of Pitzer College's Community Engagement Center, Scott Scoggins from the Ohlone Tribe and Wellness Center, two representatives from the Semilla Project, and a number of families interested in bringing urban agriculture to Pomona. At the meeting, Priscilla and I made a presentation about the program and gave applications to everyone who was interested. As the application deadline approached, I went to the Uncommon Good office to pick up applications that Carlos had received.

Priscilla and I made a connection with the Ohlone Tribe and Wellness Center by meeting Scott Scoggins, Danielle Holmes, and Tony Serda at the Uncommon Good farm family meeting. That same day they were having a workday to clean up a piece of land they had just obtained in South Pomona next to the 60 freeway on Towne Avenue to start farming. Priscilla and I gave applications to the director of the Wellness Center and made arrangements to give another presentation at the wellness center. Later on, Priscilla and I visited the Ohlone Wellness Center office one Thursday morning and made another presentation to them at their weekly staff meeting.

Maria and Sergio also put us in contact with Ali Hangan, the director of the Young Scholars Network (YSN). Ali started YSN as a way to provide resources to black high school youth in the Inland Empire, and so we spoke to him about the program and our interest in actively recruiting black youth.

Priscilla and I visited Pomona high twice during our outreach efforts. The first time we went there, Cindy Caratachea, director of the Career Center, invited us to make a presentation at

her office space, a big rectangular table in a room decorated with posters advertising different colleges and universities, but mostly the Marines, Army, and Navy. Priscilla and I started talking about the program at first to a few students, but over the course of about 15 minutes more and more students trickled in and the table was soon full. We talked about many aspects of the program and then went around the table and asked everyone to state their name and one thing they were excited to do in the summer as part of the program. Priscilla and I then visited the history classroom of Claudia Ruelas just to introduce ourselves. As we walked through the school's campus, we gave extra applications to students who were passing by. The next time we went to Cindy's office there were just three young women there to hear about the program.

Sergio Marin also put us in contact with Paul Martinez, director of Project Earth at Montclair High School. I went there one Wednesday afternoon with a stack of about 20 applications. I went into his club classroom and was surprised to see that it was completely full. In general I think the students were just as excited as I was about the program, and when I finished my little talk I didn't have enough applications to give to everyone who wanted one.

James and Charlotte, two student members of Pomona College's Asian American Resource Center (AARC), suggested I reach out to the youth from the Tongan Church. These youth had been coming to Pomona College through an AARC tutoring program. One afternoon, I met the group for barbeque and then took a group of maybe 15 of them to the farm for a tour. At the end of the tour I talked about the summer program and later I gave applications to Charlotte and James.

I met Elizabeth Harper, principal of Fremont Middle School, at the Draper Center advisory board meetings. Even though her students are middle school aged, she contacted a

teacher at her school, Eddie von Neuman, who is still in touch with some of the youth who have graduated. He sent applications from three girls who played pivotal roles in creating the garden at Fremont.

Priscilla and I met Tessa Hicks, from Pitzer College's Community Engagement Center, at the Uncommon Good farm family meeting. We talked to her about the program, and upon her request I sent her a detailed email about the program. She forwarded this to Pitzer students who actively work with high school students outside of Claremont. I am not sure how effective this outreach effort was, none of these people got back to us asking us to give presentations or putting us in touch with interested youth.

In the spring we also established relationships with different growing sites in the Inland Empire. We organized meetings with the leaders of Amy's Farm in Ontario, the Cuatro Caminos Collective in Glendora, the Tri-City Community Garden in Pomona, the Garden School Foundation in Los Angeles, and the Pomona College Organic Farm in Claremont to secure commitments from them to allow us to work on their land for the hands-on farming component of the program. We were inspired by the willingness of all the farmers to collaborate and share their knowledge and space with our group, the Youth Earth Connections (YEC). The enthusiasm of these urban farmers to collaborate with YEC was especially hopeful; there were never any feelings of competition from people who were trying to do similar work.

Selection Process

The written application asked for the interns to put their name, school, grade year, phone, address, ethnicity, age, and language spoken at home. We included a brief job description, an

outline of job responsibilities, and also included the potential schedule of two different days of the program. The written application we gave to student applicants was formulated to gauge interest in the program; we were not interested in previous academic achievement or involvement in environmental groups. We wanted interns who were not necessarily passionate about combating environmental injustices or expert farmers because we understood that these characteristics are often inaccessible to young people living in urban environments. The application included nine questions¹.

Priscilla and I met in mid May morning to begin our selection process and didn't leave until 9pm. The day was long, tiring, and rainy. Of the 34 applications we received, only a few of the applicants stood out. Most of the applicants gave only one or two sentence answers to each of the nine questions on the application. We were disappointed to see that only a few of them really put much effort into thinking about the questions – only a few of them gave full answers. We started out by choosing those we knew would be rejected: immediately we rejected applicants who were younger than 15 or older than 17. We split grouped the applications into male applicants and female applicants and then accepted the applicants who showed effort by writing long applications with thoughtful answers.

We then started making calls to the listed references – applicants listed teachers, pastors, family friends, coaches, and ROTC leaders, but many of the applicants also listed their friends as referrals. When we called the referrals we talked gave a brief overview of the summer program the responsibilities the interns. We asked what strengths the applicant could bring to the program based on the job description and we asked the contact to describe a particular moment, story, or anything that stood out in particular about the applicant. This process was frustrating because

¹ See appendix for a draft of the application

many of the contacts described the applicants as “hard working” and “dedicated.” Only a few of the referrals really stood out to help us in the selection process.

The whole selection process was difficult and painful because by the end of the day it seemed that our decisions were starting to become arbitrary. Selecting the young men was easy because we did not receive many applications from males and a few of them were in the wrong age group. However, especially among the applications of the young women, who showed much more effort than the young men, it was hard to distinguish between some of the applicants we rejected and some of the ones we accepted; we started putting applications in the reject pile simply because we had to. By the end of the calling process, I was hoping to hear a referral for a very bad student – someone who we shouldn’t accept. I worried that families of some rejected students would call to ask why their child was not accepted - it would have certainly been difficult to try and explain why great applicants had to be rejected. After we finally made our decisions to accept 6 young women and 5 young men, we drafted three letters: reject, waitlist, and accept.

It is useful to provide the demographic information of the YEC interns, based on their responses to the application form. Later on, I talk a lot about interactive exercises and activities, and thinking about the positionality of the participants fosters an understanding of how those workshops unfolded and how the interns came to form positive opinions about the program. I have anonymously quoted the interns’ responses from their application forms for this table.

Ethnicity	Age	Language spoken at home	Gender	City	School
Latina	16	Spanish	Female	Pomona	Claremont High
Mexican-American	15	Spanish	Female	Pomona	Claremont High
Hispanic	15	English	Female	Pomona	Garey High
Caucasian	16	English	Male	Pomona	Pomona High

Hispanic	17	English	Male	Pomona	Pomona High
Latina	16	Spanish	Female	Pomona	Pomona High
South Korean	16	Korean	Female	Montclair	Montclair High
Hispanic	15	Spanish	Male	Pomona	Claremont High
Caucasian	17	English	Male	Chino Hills	Chino Hills High
Mexican American	17	Spanish and English	Female	La Puente	Bassett High
Hispanic	16	Bilingual	Male	Pomona	Pomona High

In the acceptance packet we included two readings, a getting to know you questionnaire about the student, an extra envelope, a note about the difficulty of the readings, and a form to be signed saying whether they accept or decline the invitation to participate in the program. One male student declined our offer to take part in the program without giving a reason and three male students declined our offer because they needed to go to summer school. Luckily, we found three young men from our waiting list who were willing to participate as a part of YEC.

Overview of Daily Activities

The five-day a week program began on June 28th, continued for six weeks until August 6th and included many activities, games, discussions, community-building workshops, and manual labor farm work. Using vans, we made regular working visits to our four work sites. At these locations we learned about tree pruning, backyard agriculture, tilling methods, organic fertilization, bee-keeping, cow-milking, weeding, irrigation, preparing vegetable beds, trellising, and harvesting. Many of these skills were utilized in the student's individual plots on the Pomona College Organic Farm site and in their homes and communities.

Along with these workshops and farm work days, we also went on various fieldtrips. We visited the Olinda Alpha Landfill in Brea, Huntington Beach, Mount Baldy, the Cal Poly

Pomona Center for Regenerative Studies, and the South Central Farmers' 120 acre farm in Bakersfield. We also visited two local supermarkets to contribute to Uncommon Good's Pomona Valley Urban Agricultural Initiative. These trips supported our group conversations, which gave meaning and urgency to the work we did and the trips we went on.

Throughout the program, we aimed to teach in a manner that would motivate the interns to take action against the injustices which we discussed. Documentary film, discussion, and personal experience played an integral role in connecting the farm work we did with movements for sustainable farming and social justice. In typical educational environments, reading and writing are privileged tools for communication; in using film we counteracted conventional teaching models, celebrating art and interview as a valuable medium for learning. We chose films that focused on issues that are often ignored or downplayed in major news outlets and that are seldom on school curricula, watching *Food Inc.*, selections from Democracy Now! on climate justice, *The Semillas Project* short film, and *The Garden*. These films provided a foundation to talk about the industrial food system (see Pollan, "Omnivore's Dilemma"), local food systems, climate debt (see Botzen and Gowdy), food justice, environmental justice (see Vandana, "Earth Democracy"), genetically modified seeds, preserving indigenous seeds (see Vandana, "Stolen Harvest"), and environmental racism. In seminar-style discussions, we encouraged all interns to speak and encouraged them to bring in their previous experiences and perspectives.

The table below outlines each of the thirty days of the program, explaining what we did, discussions we had, and places we went. I have adapted the story presented here from journal entries, which I wrote each night throughout the summer. The activities of the program confirm that Freire and hooks' ideas are descriptive of the actual experience of the interns as students and

of Priscilla and I as teachers. This section only includes a brief chart of our daily activities - readers who are looking for a detailed description of daily activities may go to the appendix.

Day	List of Activities
Week 1, Monday	Name games, sensory tour of Pomona farm, formal tour of Pomona farm, where the wind blows game, interns choose plots, sign painting for their plots, setting individual and community guidelines, picking berries, eye contact game
Week 1, Tuesday	Screening and discussion of the first few chapters of <i>Food Inc.</i> , tour and work day at Tri-City Community Garden, pulling crab grass and picking fruit
Week 1, Wednesday	Name games, work to prepare soil on individual plots, Carlos Carrillo from Uncommon Good speaks about the Pomona Valley Food Security Assessment and the placement of fast food restaurants in low income communities, seed catalogue activity
Week 1, Thursday	Interns planned and plant their individual plots, direct seeding and transplanting demonstration. Work on east side of Pomona farm as a group. Collective harvest
Week 1, Friday	Mt. Baldy hike via ice house canyon trail
Week 2, Monday	Amy's farm tour and weeding, mulching, planting, and clearing new space for planting
Week 2, Tuesday	Mulching activity at Pomona Farm, food systems activity and discussion, work on east side of Pomona farm forming pathways and weeding
Week 2, Wednesday	Work on individual plots, no till workshop, French Intensive workshop
Week 2, Thursday	Cal Poly Pomona Lyle Center for Regenerative studies tour. Greenhouse and seed planting workshop at Pomona farm. Group harvest
Week 2, Friday	Tree pruning workshop at Tri City and weeding onions.
Week 3, Monday	Amy's farm: weeding onions, trellising beans, preparing new sites for planting, tour of the compost piles, planting corn.
Week 3, Tuesday	Mulching activity. Discussion and movies related to climate debt, climate chaos, and climate justice
Week 3, Wednesday	Compost sifting, tomato trellising, planting. Identity workshop, compost family feud activity.
Week 3, Thursday	Cookie baking in solar oven, prepared four new beds for planting, introduced individual projects ² and independent research in the computer lab.
Week 3, Friday	Trip to Huntington Beach
Week 4, Monday	Amy's Farm, pulling large weeds, making beds, planting corn, and setting up drip tape
Week 4, Tuesday	Eddie talks to the interns, identity workshop, research in computer lab for individual projects, price index at supermarkets for the Pomona Valley Food Security Assessment Survey.
Week 4, Wednesday	Work at the Glendora garden: mulching and beginning phase of the cob

² See appendix

	oven construction.
Week 4, Thursday	Film and discussion: <i>The Garden</i> . Interns harvest and make lunch for themselves using the food they harvested.
Week 4, Friday	Trip to the South Central Farmers Bakersfield Farm
Week 5, Monday	Debriefed about our trip to the South Central Farmers Bakersfield farm, mulched East side of Pomona Farm, transferred transplants from small trays to big trays, and picked presentation topics to prepare for our meeting with RootDown the next day.
Week 5, Tuesday	Meeting with RootDown cancelled. Interns give presentations to each other. Prepare six new beds for planting. Screening of <i>The Semillas Project</i> and classroom discussion about indigenous seeds, genetically modified seeds, and the importance of saving seeds.
Week 5, Wednesday	Trip to Glendora Garden to finish constructing the cobb oven.
Week 5, Thursday	Human knot game. Preparing new bed for planting and mulching and pruning the blackberry and grape vines.
Week 5, Friday	Biodiesel instruction, practice presentations.
Week 5, Sunday	Potluck dinner: interns present to their families and each intern makes a dish using ingredients from the farm.
Week 6, Monday	Beekeeping and college info day
Week 6, Tuesday	Trip to the Olinda Alpha land fill, work at Pomona farm in the afternoon – planted corn beans and squash
Week 6, Wednesday	Finished construction of the Cobb oven in Glendora
Week 6, Thursday	Work at Amy's Farm: planting potatoes, trellising beans, weeded cilantro, planted okra
Week 6, Friday	Planted beds, prepared lunch together, water balloon fight, talking stick activity, signing each other's books.

Surveys

The 7 surveys administered throughout the program played an integral role in this project and served three principal functions. First, the surveys provided Priscilla and me with anonymous weekly feedback from the interns about what they enjoyed and disliked. We changed activities and the curriculum based on this feedback to make the program more inclusive and productive. In contrast to traditional educational environments, which do not provide the space for students to express themselves freely about their curriculum, the YEC surveys provided the students with the power to form the curriculum as it unfolded. Second, the surveys were a way

for the interns to individually reflect on the issues we discussed as a group over the course of the past week. This individual reflection showed whether or not the students understood basic concepts which told us what issues we needed to explain again or expand on.

Third, and most important for the purposes of this paper, the interns' responses to the surveys address five of the original goals of YEC. These goals begin to address the problems outlined in the YEC in context of critical issues section. First, most of the interns describe in their survey responses that they are empowered with practical tools which they plan on using in the future to combat environmental and social injustices. Second, most of the interns say that they are ready to pass on their new tools and knowledge with their friends, families, and communities. Third, by the end of the program, most of the interns' stated career and educational goals were linked to solving the problems of environmental injustices. Fourth, all the interns' responses show a high enthusiasm for the YEC program in contrast to their high school educational experiences. Last, the interns unanimously expressed a desire for programs like YEC to continue in the future.

Priscilla and I administered the surveys at the end of each week, and generally allowed half an hour for the interns to complete them in silence. We began each survey by summarizing the events of the past week as a refresher. We explained that participation in the survey was not mandatory, and the interns signed consent forms which expressed their willingness to participate in the surveys³. In all, we administered six surveys during the program, and the interns completed one survey before the program started. To most effectively interpret this anonymous survey data, I have separated the surveys of each individual intern based on handwriting. I have seven surveys for each intern grouped together and I have assigned each intern a number. By

³ See appendix for the survey consent form

assigning a number, readers can also track the development of each individual intern and contextualize their response with other responses.

As I present the survey questions which are relevant to this study, I include all the responses by quoting all the interns' words. In this way, readers can be confident that I am presenting an accurate and fair picture of the sentiments of the group as a whole. More importantly, my inclusion of the language of the interns is my appreciation and valuation of their voices. Instead of projecting my ideas about lessons learned onto the interns, I hope that the interns may speak for themselves through their quotations.

Goal #1: *By the end of the program, the interns will be empowered with practical tools which they plan on using in the future to create food justice, environmental justice, and a local food system, three topics which are relevant to all the interns' lives.*

The majority of the interns did express a desire to apply their new knowledge about growing vegetables in their lives. The responses to the following two questions, taken from the first week's survey, show the concrete tools which the interns gained.

Intern	Have you learned any skills this week? What are they?	Will you use any of these skills in the future?
Intern A	"Yes, I've learned a lot this week. I learned how to plant seeds, the importance of food security and environmental justice && the importance of working as a team. Making everyone count."	"Yes, of course I will because know I know how I can grow my own food in my garden and eat organic health food. This will always stay with me. It also helps prevent people from getting sick or ill."
Intern B	"Gardening skills like transplanting, weeding, water all the basic stuff."	"I am I will try to grow my own vegetables and fruits at home."
Intern C	"I learned to plant a garden."	"Probably"
Intern D	"-Compost spreading -Seeding -Transplanting"	"Yes."
Intern E	"Skills I learned is how to pull weeds,	"I want to start a garden at my backyard

	how to make soil better. (putting cow manure + compost)”	and use these skills to be successful. I think we have a garden at school so I will use these skills to help.”
Intern F	“I’ve learned to harvest vegetables, and to pick fruits”	“I will teach my family and friends the skills I’ve learned.”
Intern G	“I learned how to correctly water plants, transplant, direct seed, weed, and use tools such as a pick ax and shovel.”	“Yes because I’m going to begin growing my own fruits and vegetables.”
Intern H	“I’ve learned how to properly, plant, care and pick food off the trees.”	“I believe I will use these skills in the future.”
Intern I	“I’ve learned a lot about the food that is available in our country through the film. Most importantly, I’ve learned about growing different seeds.”	“I really hope to use the skills I’ve learned to grow a better garden in my own back yard so I can grow my own food!”
Intern J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How to make compost. -The importance of mulch -how to transplant plants properly -how to care for seeds” 	“Yes I am, I will most likely use these skills to save money by growing my own food in my backyard.”
Intern K ⁴		

These responses show that by the end of the first week, all the interns had a basic understanding of how to take care of and grow plants. The interns’ new knowledge about plant care is empowering, especially in consideration of the Inland Empire environment⁵.

Another question from the first week’s survey attempts to link topics covered in YEC with the interns’ lives and communities. This question refers to the documentary *Food Inc.* and the related discussion guide. The responses to this question demonstrate how the YEC curriculum directly addressed the experiences of the interns. The responses also show that the interns were beginning to grasp the problems of the industrial food system.

Intern	How do issues raised in the film (and discussed by the group) about the USA’s food system pertain to your life and your community?
Intern A	“The USA system affects my family as many other families in my community and around the world. Lower class doesn’t have the change to obtain healthy organic food.”

⁴ Intern K joined the program on the sixth day of the program.

⁵ See YEC in context of critical issues section

Intern B	“That we really need to keep each other informed about food world economics and health awareness.”
Intern C	“They make a big difference and have been hurting our health.”
Intern D	“The food we eat may be contaminated.”
Intern E	“It concerns me on how they feed chicken or cows. Or how chickens aren’t natural. Scientists design these chickens to grow faster than normal. And we eat these animals that aren’t natural or eat natural.”
Intern F	“It influences me to do something about it instead of just sitting and watching it happen.”
Intern G	“It motivates me to earn an education and use it to bring communities together to not continue relying on big businesses that exploit workers and abuse animals as well as nature.”
Intern H	“It affects my life and my community in many ways. I cannot wait to get more projects done.”
Intern I	“These issues effect my community, and my family particularly. Because both my parents work full-time we don’t have a lot of time or money to access healthy food. Learning more about these issues gives me hope that I will be able to continue helping resolve these issues.”
Intern J	“The issues raised in the film that pertain to my life and community include the use of migrant workers for cheap labor and the cost and quality of food in areas with low-income families.”
Intern K ⁶	

Intern I’s response demonstrates the fact that through meaningful work, we can cultivate a sense of hope for the future, and that through hands on learning through labor, we have the power to make changes. Intern I’s hope came from an understanding that she/he was combating an issue that is central to his/her life. This sense of empowerment was central to the YEC urban farming youth curricula – we designed activities and discussion so that the interns would know that their work was valuable and that by working together it was possible to disrupt conventional ways of living and knowing. Intern G’s response shows how he/she understood the root cause of some of the problems of the industrial food system – knowing the root cause allows us to most effectively find solutions⁷. Intern F’s response to this question also provides a sense of personal

⁶ Intern K joined the program on the sixth day of the program.

⁷ This response also addresses the issue of indoctrination, and how hard it is to adhere to Freire’s pedagogy for liberation. Sometimes I felt as though we were feeding the interns with our politics,

accountability: by actually working towards positive change in the hands on farming program, the interns realized that they have power in numbers through action. The simple process of beginning to understand where our food comes from can open our eyes to a responsibility to fix the broken system. Intern H's response shows that the interns gained useful tools – they not only sat in a classroom and discussed the problems of the industrial food system, but were given the chance to explore positive alternatives.

By the midpoint in the program, many of the students outlined radical changes in their thinking. By asking them if our discussions and activities impacted their everyday actions, we pushed the interns to consider not only the effect of YEC on others in their communities, but on themselves.

Intern	We are at the midpoint in the program. Have any activities or discussions impacted the way you now think or things you do? Please give a specific example.
Intern A	“I have learned a lot in this program, and the discussions of food security. Was really shocking to know food production is a system in which they don't care about people's health. All they care about is money and how much they're making. (speed)”
Intern B	“Learning about the things I listed in Question 1 ⁸ because I look at everything different because people really need to stop and take a look at what's happening.”
Intern C	“not really”
Intern D ⁹	
Intern E	“Climate debt is an interesting topic, how we owe a debt to the environment. I think it's a good idea. It's sad how we won't change.”
Intern F	“I am aware that even buying fast food is voting, and my goal is not to buy fast food for a long time.”
Intern G	“I rollerblade a lot more now to keep from wasting fossil fuels. I also started a compost pile.”
Intern H	“Now that we are halfway through the program, a specific activity that impacted on things I do is, the days that we've gone to take care of trees and their fruit, I've

similar to what Freire calls education banking. This response shows that it is very difficult to push the students to not only be critical of injustices around them, but also of what we were teaching them.

⁸ Eco-socialism, farm workers rights, climate debt, climate justice, and going to the beach

⁹ This intern was absent during the third week

	learned so much. I've learned how to pick fruit, cut limbs (or branches) off to make it easier for us the fruit-pickers to pick the fruit. And also, how often we should water the trees."
Intern I	"Our discussion on the food system has affected how I think about the food that we eat. I have encouraged my family to eat organic food."
Intern J	"I have realized how much better organic food is in taste rather than food from the supermarket."
Intern K	"I wasn't aware of how prevalent racism is in my time and society, this program has opened my eyes to the fact that it is a real issue."

Intern A's response demonstrates a very radical realization, because it challenges capitalism. The response is brave statement in a society which teaches us not to question, but instead to passively accept the world around us¹⁰. Intern B's response reflects the sense of urgency cultivated in YEC. The response also challenges the notion that everything is functioning as it should be; it reflects the call to action which we presented to the interns. Intern F's response shows the realization that our everyday actions and personal choices reflect our politics and beliefs. However, not all the interns expressed sentiments that the YEC program had a significant effect on their lives, as shown by intern C's response. Even though the majority of the interns wrote about how their lives had changed (in only just three weeks) it is impossible to influence the beliefs of all participants.

A question from the fourth week's survey asked the interns to consider how they are involved in the movement for food justice and environmental justice. The question reminded them that their work is valuable, and that they can meaningfully contribute to positive social change. Most of their responses show how they rationalized their work in the YEC program as part of a broad movement.

Intern	In what ways do you think you are/can be a part of the movement for food justice or environmental justice?
Intern A	"I think we are I'm a part of food justice / EJ because I'm helping out by growing my

¹⁰ As Freire and hooks have argued

	own food in my plot I'm saving fuel, the transportation need, and I believe that I can make a difference. All it takes is <u>one</u> person. I would like to do more but I need help and resources to have more knowledge and help people out!"
Intern B	"Getting involved with the community to clean up somewhere or donate healthy foods at schools."
Intern C	"By helping on the farms we go to."
Intern D	"Supporting community or organic farms."
Intern E	"Because I'm becoming knowledgeable of food justice and e.j. I have the potential power to make change."
Intern F	"Spread the word, donate."
Intern G	"By telling people to grow their own food. Fighting laws against the environment."
Intern H	"In the ways I think I can be part of the movement for food justice is by spreading the word, planting my own food and helping surrounding farms every now and then."
Intern I	"I think that becoming informed on all the problems that have occurred in attempting to ensure food / environmental justice is the first step in being a part of the movement. We can change our lifestyle, and share it with others."
Intern J	"Ways that I can be part of the movement is to spread the word and have people help in their own community garden."
Intern K	"By helping out on Amy's farm growing some of my own produce at home or in a community garden. Also by 'voting w/ the dollar' I can influence corporations that care more about money than people."

The last question of the sixth survey also asks the interns to situate the work of YEC as part of a much broader movement for change. In their responses, the interns explored how they have the power to make a difference.

Intern	As the YEC community, do you think that we have been working toward social justice? How?
Intern A	"As the YEC community I believe we have because we're all different colors and races and were reaching towards the same goal. We are working with Carlos [Carillo] well helping him actually with the food surveys in order to open a community garden for people who are of low income and don't have the money or resources to healthy food... We went to see the members from the movie "The Garden" Alberto whom was a real inspiration to me, because as people of color they fought until the end. They went really far. I believe they went through a struggle but they overcame it and I'm really inspired me into doing movements to change the systems."
Intern B	"I think we have because at first no one knew each other and we all wanted to make a difference in our community because if no one wants to then who will? We all got to know each other little by little and we started working towards helping our communities."
Intern C	"Yes. By coming together and working together."

Intern D	“Yes we have. The work we do transcends all ethnic, cultural, racial, and social barriers, because we are all alive because our ancestors lived this organic life.”
Intern E	“I do believe we have been working toward social justice. We have been fighting for our rights to help open a community garden.”
Intern F	“Yes, because not only has YEC changed 11 peoples lives, but we as a group have already made a better environment at Pomona Farm.”
Intern G	“Yes! Local farming / urban farming work towards social justice because it discourages the exploitation of animals, workers, and the environment and the corruption of the nation. YEC is a part of this process of working towards social justice.”
Intern H	“I do think that we have been working towards social justice by breaking down barriers, that we as people put up.”
Intern I ¹¹	
Intern J	“Yes because we are doing work that helps people who don’t have access to healthy food create their own or to have access to more of it.”
Intern K ¹²	

The interns describe how they feel empowered as part of a larger movement, and understand farm work as an appropriate response.

Goal #2: *By the end of the YEC program, the interns will be ready to pass on their new tools and knowledge with their friends, families, and communities.*

The last question of week #4 survey asked the interns if they felt prepared to teach others what they learned at YEC. Even this question is disruptive because in school settings the assumption is often made that the teacher and student have definable concrete binary roles. By asking the interns if they feel prepared to teach others what they’ve learned, we not only make the assumption that they are able teachers *as well as* students, but we also pass onto them a *responsibility* to share with others their new knowledge. The question itself also empowers them by valuing their interpretations and definitions of the environmental issues we studied.

Intern	Do you feel prepared to teach others what you have learned at YEC?
Intern A	“I feel somewhat prepared, but I would like to learn a lot more things and expand on

¹¹ Intern I was not present when the sixth survey was administered.

¹² Intern K was not present when the sixth survey was administered.

	my knowledge to share it with my community and my loved ones.”
Intern B	“Yes I am”
Intern C	“not really”
Intern D	“I feel comfortable to teach some of what I’ve learned.”
Intern E	“I already am. Everything I’m learning I share with others.”
Intern F	“Yes I am. In fact, I’m planning on organizing a powerpoint about what we’ve learned and presenting them at school.”
Intern G	“I feel prepared since we go over it a lot and I practically know this.”
Intern H	“I do feel prepared to teach others what I learned at E.Y.C.”
Intern I	“YES!” What we have accomplished has been very informational, open, and honest. With this ‘hands-on’ teaching method, the information is easy to retain and share.”
Intern J	“Yes because I have learned information that will help me and other people lead healthy lives.”
Intern K	“Yes, the discussion we have helps to prepare me to engage in conversations that can influence people to be concerned about environmental justice and food justice.”

In answering this question, only two out of the 11 interns said that they did not yet feel prepared to share their knowledge. When the interns begin to self identify as teachers, they adopt a new sense of power.

The topics which the interns discuss below, taken from the last week’s survey, are rarely discussed in the popular culture or in the mainstream media and they are rarely studied in school. As such, it is vital for the interns to see themselves as teachers to spread the information which societal institutions withhold from young people.

Intern	Please list five things you’ve learned at YEC that you’re excited to share with others and briefly explain each one.	What is one thing you’ve learned here that you’re excited to confidently teach somebody else? Why?
Intern A	<p>“Everything we learned was meaningful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Food systems: a system where you plant, grow, harvest, and transport, process, and eat the food. Conventional, local > better system. -environmental justice – all people get together not regarding what in overall race, class, or sexism they are to give back to the planet. -Food justice – everyone has the opportunity to be able to get healthy food. -Food security – knowing where your food comes 	<p>“Food justice: because we have to make a difference now. It’s important that all people get the accesses to getting healthy food in their community, not regarding race, color, status. There’s a lot to be done and here we come!! I’m excited to teach people all the important things</p>

	from...all people having access to healthy food in their community.”	I’ve learned.”
Intern B	“I am excited to show my family how I learned to plant, transplant, compost, mulch, thinning, and learn how much a plant needs sunlight or shade and I also learned how to dispose of waste properly like with leftover eaten fruit you can reuse it by composting it and when I rake my yard for leaves I can use it as mulch.”	“I learned how to be more friendly towards others because this program taught me that even though everyone’s different if doesn’t mean we can’t get along.”
Intern C	“Solar oven: sunlight heats the food Cobb oven: oven made of dirt Sifter: take rocks out Bees: how they work”	“how a solar oven works, because it is easily understood and it works.”
Intern D	“Compost - To be able to make organic fertilizer transplanting – to know how to plant plants with roots plant care – to know why and how to care for plants how to harvest – to harvest fruits properly how to have fun working - that working isn’t always work.”	“How to make a cobb oven. Because it’s so cool to make a sculpture that is an oven.”
Intern E	“1. Benefits of growing your own food – don’t contribute to big companies (pollution, pesticides) 2. conventional vs. local food system 3. how to grow your own food 4. compost – poop, dead plants, etc. 5. start a plot – pick a spot, how to fix soil, how to plant transplant”	“Climate debt is something that reached out to me. We (people on earth) and industrial countries have done so much harm. Climate debt means cutting back 20% and helping those who are being affected – (non industrial countries)
Intern F	“1. Local and conventional food system: to summarize these two systems, local food system is a system that describes food that comes from a local garden, farm, or farmer’s market. Conventional is a system where food is basically man made or handled; therefore, it would waste more fuel than local. 2. how to make a bed: take out the drip tape(s), pull weeds, till the soil, add compost, and flatten the bed. 3. How to transplant: flip over the container with the plant and gently tap the bottom, place it in the hole dug on the soil, cover, and water it. 4. How to harvest fruits: never pull them out, but always twist them. 5. benefits of an adobe house: keeps inside cool in summer and warm in winter, less killing of trees!”	“I’m excited to confidently teach others about growing your own food and building a cob oven because it is such a natural, convenient, and affordable way to live and eat.”
Intern G	“-conventional vs. local food system: local food has more nutrients and less pesticides / herbicides	“I’m excited to teach my family and friends how to

	<p>-pollution / climate debt: America / Americans owe debt to countries such as Bolivia for releasing 20% of the world's pollution (which is ~ 140 million tons).</p> <p>-crop rotation: It's best to rotate crops after their season of growing is done to ensure the soil remains nutritious</p> <p>-grafting / figs: grafting is done with citrus trees that stopped producing fruit</p> <p>-stop the use of Styrofoam: Styrofoam is really bad for the environment and takes years to decompose."</p>	<p>individually help the environment through planting their own food and how and using their car less. I'm investing my time in this because change starts small, with community and my community is my family. When I have the ability to teach my family I will learn how to teach others out of my family."</p>
Intern H	<p>"The conventional and local food systems. Because I've found that when I speak about this to others, it grabs their attention and interest, and it's really important to know where your food comes from...One last thing about YEC that I learned is about the effects that are made from the addiction of oil. That we, the ones who use oil in our everyday lives, are the ones who are the least affected by our consumption. I believe this is important to know because the lives of people who have the least to do with this problem. I find it important to let others know about this."</p>	<p>"One thing that I've learned and I'm excited to confidently teach somebody else about is about the opportunity I had to be able to learn, grow, and work hard for my own food and the benefits of doing so. Everything that I've learned, I want to pass on, but I know that many won't want to know, I'm still going to keep it going."</p>
Intern I ¹³		
Intern J	<p>"-Planting: I have learned how to plant and grow my own food.</p> <p>-climate chaos: how we affect the environment</p> <p>-composting: I have learned how composting brings nutrients to the soil.</p> <p>-community: how to get the community together</p> <p>-farming techniques: I have learned to plant without till and how to use the French intensive method"</p>	<p>"I am very excited to teach people about how to start their own garden. This is because it will help people save money."</p>
Intern K ¹⁴		

Even before the end of the program, intern H is already transcending her/his traditional positionality as a student. By writing 'when I speak about this to others,' the intern shows that he/she is already actively sharing information *during the program*. The intern takes on the role of

¹³ This intern was absent when the sixth survey was administered

¹⁴ This intern was absent when the sixth survey was administered

teacher by choosing to spread the knowledge she/he finds important to his/her life. Even in the face of opposition, intern H is dedicated, feels a responsibility to share information, and becomes empowered with this responsibility and confidence that the information can be passed on effectively. Intern G's response demonstrates that this intern is becoming a beacon through which the light will spread. He/she recognizes the scope of her/his own power: it is possible to create change by starting small and gradually building a movement. Intern B's response shows the wide range of valuable lessons extracted from YEC. The response shows that program was not just about urban farming or Environmental Justice; it was also about community development and personal growth, which are prerequisites for valuing the earth.

Goal #3: *by the end of the program, the interns' stated career goals will be linked to solving the problems of environmental injustices.*

Before talking about the intern's stated career goals at the end of the program, it is necessary to consider the intern's career goals before the start of the program, taken from the 'all about me survey.'¹⁵ The form, which we mailed to the interns before the start of the program, included 17 questions which provided information about the personalities, likes, and dislikes of the interns, which helped me and Priscilla get to know the interns before the start of the program. Two of the questions from the 'all about me' questionnaire offer special insight for the purposes of this study because they give a sense of the interns' general thoughts about care for the earth, prior work towards farming or social justice, and worldviews. Knowing the thoughts and previous work of the interns before the first day of YEC allows me to draw conclusions about how they changed during the 6-week internship program.

Intern	In what extracurricular activities are	Where do you see yourself in ten years?
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¹⁵ See appendix

	you involved? What are your hobbies?	
Intern A	“I’m recently not involved in any extracurricular activities. But a couple of months ago, I was in a Belly dancing class. My hobbies are listening to music, and playing softball, I enjoy dancing too.”	“I see myself almost out of college because the career I want to follow is (heart surgeon) and it’s a lot of years in college. I see myself in my own house , with my own car having a stable economic status. And helping my parents out.”
Intern B	“I am currently not enrolled in one, my hobbies include riding my bike, playing videogames, watching tv, ride my skateboard.”	“Having a steady job after graduating from college.”
Intern C	“I play softball and ride mountain and dirt bikes. Snowboard, build cars and my truck, play guitar and take pictures and edit them.”	“I see myself as a successful photographer.”
Intern D	“JROTC, paintballing, call of duty online.”	“An aviation officer in the army.”
Intern E	“I am not in any sports but I do enjoying playing soccer with friends. I try to find volunteer activities. I use to help with teen green but lately they haven’t been sending emails or updates.”	“In ten years, I hope I will have graduated from college or continue my college education. (Graduate School)”
Intern F	“I am involved in key club international and project earth at Montclair High School. I have been a violinist since 5 th grade and have been a member of the Chaffey District Orchestra. For me, playing the violin is not only a hobby, but a necessity in my life. I also enjoy reorganizing furnitures in my room to give a sense of new place.”	“I see myself still attending college and medical school to become a surgeon.”
Intern G	“I’m in softball volleyball, and Upward Bound. I enjoy rollerblading, dancing, and singing.”	“I see myself fresh out of college and working at a job relating to politics, sociology, or chemistry. I’m living on my own with a few pets.”
Intern H	“At the moment I am not involved in any extracurricular activities. On my free time I enjoy to play my guitar, sing, work on improving my basketball skills, learn how to play soccer, read, and discover new things that I hadn’t known before.”	“In ten years from today I see myself in Florida.”
Intern I	“Currently I am most heavily involved in studying with my school’s Academic	“In ten years, I see myself in college, headed towards a career in something that

	Decathlon team. My hobbies widely range from reading, to attending live musical theater productions in downtown LA.”	incorporates my love for music and English.”
Intern J	“cross country, track and field, lifeguarding, art, video games, guitar, music.”	“working as an architect with a family.”
Intern K	“I’m involved in choir and my church. I love music cultures. A sort of a fascination with the foreign, I suppose. My hobbies include reading, going to the gym, and enjoying the outdoors via hiking or biking.”	“I’m so capricious, I really don’t know anymore. I had always wanted to be a doctor, but this past school year I realized that I don’t have much of a penchant towards anatomy. So I’m open minded for now – I’m not sure about being married or anything either, too far to think ahead!”

Knowing that the majority of student hobbies and future aspirations did not directly address the issues outlined in the ‘YEC in context of critical issues’ section makes it possible to assert that the program’s food justice oriented curriculum and hands on training actually produced meaningful growth in the interns. Interns E and F were the only two who mentioned any activity relating to care for the earth; these students were involved in the Project Earth Club at her/his high school and Uncommon Good’s Teen Green Program. Most of the responses were not directly linked with the values we hoped to bring to the interns throughout the summer, such as activism, social justice, care for the earth, and sustainable agriculture. Knowing how responses to the ten years question at the end of the program in comparison to the responses at the beginning will strongly indicate whether or not the program had a significant impact on the students.

Throughout the responses to the sixth survey, each intern described that YEC did have a positive impact on their lives and that the experience of being a part of YEC altered the course of their lives and career goals. By the end of the summer, the interns became change makers and demonstrated an eagerness to share their new knowledge and passion for the earth with their

friends and families. The design of the YEC program and curriculum directly addresses the need for young leaders and shows the interns that they have power, agency, and maturity to conquer the world. The following responses to this question are extremely revealing – all the interns except one expressed a desire to change the course of their life paths.

Intern	After six weeks, how has being a part of YEC influenced your educational, career, and life goals?
Intern A	“YEC has helped me gain a lot of knowledge. I really learned things that I had no clue of and is things are meaningful because I will carry them on for the rest of my life. Career wise know I understand why people with low income spend more time in the hospital because they don’t have the chance to eat as healthy and my goals in life is to be a heart surgeon to save people’s lives, but also want to make a chance for my community...”
Intern B	“I learned that in life you have to work hard in order to get what you truly desire weather if its in education, career and any life goals and no matter what I know I can pursue them.”
Intern C	“I don’t think it has, but I think helps me for the future.”
Intern D	“I have just had my goals reaffirmed. I realized that the educational goals can be done.”
Intern E	“After six weeks, YEC has influenced me to become a better student, pursue a career to help the environment and grow my own food / recycle. Also to be more environmental friendly.”
Intern F	“YEC has educationally taught me about agriculture and environment that I would not normally learn from a school book. I have become more aware of our world and learned about the beauty of growing your own food.”
Intern G	“YEC influenced my future goals tremendously. I now want to study environment as well as public policy. It has also influenced me to possibly start a club at school similar to YEC.”
Intern H	“YEC has opened new pathways for my career in the future, I really want to continue learning about ways to help the planet, stay informed about the world and my community. YEC has helped me find who I am, at my school I felt lost and not sure of where I stood, but after these six weeks I feel free.”
Intern I ¹⁶	
Intern J	“After being a part of YEC it has influenced my educational, career, and life goals because it makes me also take into consideration the safety of the environment if I ever become an architect.”
Intern K ¹⁷	

¹⁶ This intern was not present when the sixth survey was administered.

¹⁷ This intern was not present when the sixth survey was administered.

Intern H expressed a desire to not only continue to expand his/her mind, but also wrote about a spiritual transformation. Intern G wrote in more concrete terms that YEC focused his/her desire to change the world through public policy. When analyzing this quote in comparison to stated career goals in the ‘all about me survey,’ this quote shows how powerful the influence of the alternative curriculum can be in fostering social awareness among high school students. In addition, the intern E expressed the idea that YEC was the point of departure on a journey of self (re)definition. In comparison with the responses from the all about me survey, this quote demonstrates how the interns developed different ideas of themselves and their future lives based on the curriculum of YEC. Even intern C, who did not think that YEC had a significant impact on his/her life, recognized the inherent value of the alternative education program.

Goal #4: *the interns will be highly enthusiastic for the YEC program in contrast to their high school educational experiences.*

The second question from the week #1 survey compares experiences in high school to the experience at YEC. The responses highlight the importance of an experiential pedagogy, and four of the responses even mention an appreciation for a hands-on approach to learning.

Intern	What are your perceptions about what you have learned from your classes at school compared to the knowledge and skills you have learned from this summer internship program so far?
Intern A	“I have learned how important food-security is and how we can make a change. Doing hands-on activities.”
Intern B	“School makes it boring to learn while this program lets us have fun while we learn.”
Intern C	“I don’t see very many similarities.”
Intern D	“So far the internship has taught me more than schools.”
Intern E	“At school, they don’t really teach you where food comes from. Just being here at YEC for a week I have learned where the food comes from.”
Intern F	“I think we’re all so busy learning in school that people forget to learn about the world we live in, which is critical.”
Intern G	“In class I only learn theory, but what good is that if application of the theory isn’t experienced? For this reason I enjoy this internship more than school because it’s a

	combo of experience and learning.”
Intern H	“I have learned important hands-on activities that will be useful later on.”
Intern I	“Something I’ve noticed is that classes at school are extremely crowded, and only consists of bookwork due to the amount of time that we have to cover a ridiculous amount of material. I have enjoyed learning with this summer internship because it is intimate and includes a lot of hands-on work. I learn better that way.”
Intern J	“I have learned more at the internship about where food comes from than at school, especially when it comes to how our food is made.”
Intern K ¹⁸	

Intern’s G idea was central to the design of the program; the hands-on work was not valuable or relevant without the tools to understand why we were digging, planting, weeding, etc. Manual labor has the potential to lose its meaning without a curriculum that situates the work and provides meaning for it. This addresses one of the central differences between the YEC program and the typical high school curriculum: we always pushed the students to describe why the work they did applied to their lives as opposed to many high schools, where it seems that high school students are forced to stick to a curriculum just to prepare for tests.

A question from the second week’s survey asked the interns to consider how class size affects their learning. The responses to this question demonstrate that the majority of the interns are not satisfied with their high school experiences.

Intern	Compare the typical class size in your high school to the number of interns in the YEC program. If the smaller number of interns at YEC better facilitates your learning, please explain how.’
Intern A	“Yes, there’s about 52-56 students in my classes. And in the YEC internship it’s only 11 of us and that facilitates things and learning in many ways. We have more attention and more time to focus on each other longer.”
Intern B	“By bringing students together and farming and learning about agriculture.”
Intern C	“yes because you are more connected to the people who are teaching.”
Intern D	“The smaller groups is better to learn because we get more hands on, one on one time.”
Intern E	“Typical size would be around thirty people. I enjoy the smaller number because you get to know everybody more and learn better. There’s not a lot of people.”

¹⁸ Intern K was not present when the first survey was administered.

Intern F	“I think YEC is better if it has smaller number of interns just because you get to know everyone better, and it feels more like family.”
Intern G	“My school has 20-36 students a class which is not too good for learning because there’s so much work for teachers to grade. The smaller number of interns here encourages learning and participation. It’s also easier to build a community which we are creating here.”
Intern H	“It does because we get to know everyone better, and the intensity is high in everything we do.”
Intern I	“Because there are fewer interns here at YEC, I feel that I can learn a lot better. With a small amount of people, each person gets the attention that he or she needs. It’s an intimate program, and I enjoy it.”
Intern J	“The YEC has a much smaller class size and it better facilitates learning.”
Intern K	“The number of interns in the program is significantly less than my typical high school class size. This better facilitates my learning because my areas of improvement are better corrected by the instructors and I am able to communicate better with my colleagues.”

These comments show the interns believe there is no specific effort to build community within the classroom. Even though it is already common knowledge that classes are overcrowded (see Guggenheim, *Waiting for Superman*) these quotes address not only the fact that students in large classes don’t receive personal attention, but that students also do not have a chance to build community when there are so many in a single class. It addresses the fact that when students feel as if they are a part of a community, they will be more comfortable contributing to discussion and being honest. The community, or ‘family’ in intern F’s language, of YEC allowed for meaningful discussion where all opinions were valued and welcome.

Another question from the second week quantifies numerically the interns’ feelings about the YEC program in comparison to their high school experiences.

Intern	How enthusiastic are you about what you are learning in your high school classes? Rate your enthusiasm on a 1-10 scale, 10 being most enthusiastic.	How enthusiastic are you about what you are learning in the cultivating youth earth connections summer internship program? Rate your enthusiasm on a 1-10 scale, 10 being most enthusiastic.
Intern A	6	10
Intern B	8	9

Intern C	5	6
Intern D	7	9
Intern E	7	10
Intern F	8	10
Intern G	9	9
Intern H	6	9
Intern I	8	10
Intern J	5	7
Intern K	10	10

The average response for high school enthusiasm was 7.18, whereas the average enthusiasm for YEC was 9.

A question from the third week's survey asked the interns to discuss how standardized testing affects their learning and compares the effects of standardized testing in high school to the learning experience at YEC.

Intern	Some of you have talked about regular and mandatory standardized testing at your schools. Please discuss how this affects your education. Please compare those feelings with your feelings about the YEC education.
Intern A	"I feel like the school board is forcing us to take some test that supposedly determines how smart we are by throwing in random questions. I think that's not the way to determine how smart you are! YEC we are a family and we don't need tests to show our knowledge."
Intern B	"Makes me want to learn in school more because the YEC made things more simple for me"
Intern C	"They really have no effect."
Intern D ¹⁹	
Intern E	"At school it feels like we have to learn whats on the test + thats it. Here we learn different ideas and aren't constantly being quizzed."
Intern F	"Some of those tests do not contribute to our learning. But I feel like YEC is something important not for school, but for living independently in the future."
Intern G	"In YEC there is no pressure for conformity. We all do the same work and learn different lessons from it. At school there's too much pressure with the testing to really see the benefit of it."
Intern H	"Truthfully the regular and mandatory standardized testing at my school is just if you pay attention good, if not come after school to discuss what you don't understand, and then test. The only problem with this is that many times I wan't able to stay for the study sessions. But at YEC we don't need to worry about tests. ☺"

¹⁹ This intern was absent during the third week

Intern I	“The testing in my school seems like it asks too much of us with too little time. Lessons are rushed and impersonal, while seemingly irrelevant to students. Here we’re not rushed or asked too much of.”
Intern J	“Mandatory standardized testing helps me recognize what I do and don’t remember and it’s not all that hard. With the YEC education, they are teaching me lots of new things that I haven’t before.”
Intern K	“Standardized testing isn’t as awful as a lot of students claim, but preparation for these tests does take away valuable instruction time. It’s nice not to have the pressure of having to study and review for tests at YEC. It allows for more instruction time.”

Most interns wrote that standardized testing negatively impacted their learning experiences, while programs which do not pressure students through testing, like the YEC program, can be healthy and can address different learning styles and preferences. At YEC, students were pushed to demonstrate their grasp of new material through discussion; they also showed their hard work by making presentations to their peers and families at the final potluck dinner. Intern I’s response addresses the issue of relevancy: learning experiences at small hands on farming environmental justice focused programs, like YEC, appeal to students because the issues these programs address are extremely relevant - they do not occur in an atmosphere of competition and pressure.

In analyzing responses to questions from the fourth week’s survey which asked the interns to describe their personal connection to topics learned in school in comparison to topics learned at YEC, the interns responded that they feel much more connected to the YEC curriculum than their school curriculums.

Intern	Do you feel personally connected to the topics you learn at school?	Do you feel personally connected to the topics you learn at YEC?
Intern A	“Yes sometimes I do but usually it’s things about the past tense things that already happened. Chemistry, biology, and sciences classes I need for my future job, so they are pretty useful.”	“Yes. Of course because this program has really helped me realize a lot of things and has helped me understand the importance of FJ and EJ and how I can make a difference. How growing you own food is helpful in many way. A lot of things that I will carry on for the rest of my life.”

Intern B	“yes I do”	“yes extremely”
Intern C	“no”	“sometimes”
Intern D	“some of the topics, but very little”	“Yes, because I am actually learning but also practicing”
Intern E	“not really. I understand why I’m learning it but there’s no connection personally. (Except AP chem)”	“Yes because environmental justice and food justice relates to everyone on the planet.”
Intern F	“not very much, just in english and science”	“Yes I do”
Intern G	“not really, topics I learn at school aren’t very exciting.”	“Yes. Learning how to grow my own food, EJ, Food Justice, climate debt is all important to me.”
Intern H	“at times I do feel myself personally connected with the topics at school but it’s not often.”	“Yes I do feel personally connected.”
Intern I	“Not particularly, <u>NO</u> . A lot of the time it seems as though I am forced information within a small amount of time, only to have no use for it.”	“Yes, of course. They directly relate to our lives.”
Intern J	“no, if any, very little”	“A lot more than what I learn at school.”
Intern K	“I do. I am especially passionate about English, as literacy is essential in educating people, educated people are essential for a functioning democracy.”	“Very much so. The program is centered around topics, such as the healthy well being of all people as well as the health of our ecosystems, which I feel passionate about.”

The responses to these two questions display a general trend, with a few outliers. The interns wrote that they do not usually feel personally connected to their school curriculums, but that they did feel connected to the YEC programming. This personal spiritual connection is imperative because a feeling of spiritual connection provides motivation which provides success. We are often motivated to study and engage with the topics which have a direct effect on our lives.

A question from the fifth survey asked the interns, ‘Have you ever discussed or read about social justice issues at school? If so, what were they? Were those issues relevant to you?’ In general, even though most interns say that issues of social justice are relevant to their lives,

the majority of students responded that issues of social justice are not, and have never been, discussed in school²⁰.

Intern	Have you ever discussed or read about social justice issues at school? If so, what were they? Were those issues relevant to you?
Intern A	“No, we never at any point discussed social justice in school for any of my classes. I really would of liked to have learned about it, because it’s really important.”
Intern B	“I didn’t learn of these things yet. Right now these issues are relevant to me.”
Intern C	“Not that I remember.”
Intern D	“no we haven’t”
Intern E	“I have never read or discussed about social justice issues at school. More focused on what we have to learn.”
Intern F	“No, social justice is not discussed at our school.”
Intern G	“I haven’t read anything on social justice at school except a few events in history relating to women’s working rights which wasn’t relevant to me because of the time difference.”
Intern H	“I have but I don’t recall them. I do remember that the subject about social justice was during history class. The issues were not relevant to me, because of the point of view that was presented.”
Intern I	“No, never.”
Intern J	“Some of the social justice issues we talked about the immigration law in Arizona and that was relevant because I knew of people who were illegal immigrants.”
Intern K	“Only briefly do we ever discuss matter of race and gender in my school and not in much depth. The issue of oppression is relevant to everyone, including myself, as none of us have a neutral role in society. I’m learning that it is not enough not to be racist but that I must be antiracist from my conversations with Priscilla.”

Eight interns responded plainly that they had never discussed social justice in school. The responses show that traditional curricula do not consider social justice related topics which are relevant to students, therefore distancing and detaching students’ own experiences from subject material and creating an environment of disinterestedness. Of the three students who said they had discussed social justice in school, only one of them said that the topic discussed was relevant, the other two responses showed a strong detachment and disengagement from the

²⁰ A potential critique of this question is that the students may have been exposed to social justice issues, but that they might say that they have not studied them because teachers did not explicitly define those issues as social justice related. However, for the purposes of this study, I make the assumption that the students would have remembered the issues that made impressions.

subject material. This highlights the importance of discussing current stories of injustice, movements for social justice, and how we can work to create change towards an equitable society. Discussions which relate to the students' lives and experiences helped to motivate students' active involvement.

The last questions of the third survey address how knowledge gained from conventional school settings can complement alternative knowledge gained from programs like YEC.

Intern	How will you apply your new skills and knowledge in the future?	How will you apply your skills and knowledge gained from your school in the future?
Intern A	"I will apply what I learned to my home, community, and school. (be careful with what we buy) Share my experiences and tell people of how growing your own food is much healthier and cheaper."	"We're all human~and we all live in this world. (make a change) ☺ I will inform my fellow friends, and classmates of the differences we can do if we all came together. No matter what color we are."
Intern B	"I would like to plant my own garden at school or at home so everyone can see my knowledge learned at the YEC"	"Go to college and be successful so I can go into politics and speak my mind about our environment."
Intern C	"Depends on what happens"	"I probably won't use a lot of them."
Intern D ²¹		
Intern E	"I will tell everybody the new knowledge I have gained and maybe will pursue and use it as a career."	"Some classes that I've enjoyed I might pursue."
Intern F	"I want to teach the others."	"Use it to get to college."
Intern G	"I will apply my new found knowledge in the future by being an advocate for environmental justice."	"I will apply my study skills and knowledge to excel in college."
Intern H	"I'm sure I'll know once it happens ☺"	"In college and whatever job I end up with."
Intern I	"I will share the information I've learned with my family, as well as grow food in my own backyard."	"I will apply the discipline that school has taught me. (as opposed to actual knowledge from YEC)"
Intern J	"I will most likely start my own garden in the future."	"I will apply them in order to get a job as an architect."
Intern K	"I'm excited to grow my own food as	"I plan to use it in college. Also, my teachers

²¹ This intern was absent during the third week

	well as use my knowledge to better contribute to our democracy. Educating others through discussion is one important thing I've learned from Priscilla. Not talking at people but with them."	have taught me a lot about critical thinking. I've learned to love reading and discussion. Schools can be amazing. My high school exp. has been great."
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Intern B's response demonstrates two key concepts. First, the intern, by expressing a desire to show everyone the new knowledge, shows that he/she is proud. In addition, the intern shows how he/she will combine the alternative knowledge gained from YEC with the practical social tools gained from traditional schools in order to become an activist.

Goal #5: *the interns will unanimously express a desire for programs like YEC to continue in the future.*

In the responses to the last question of the week five survey, the eleven interns unanimously responded that they would like to see the YEC program continue into the future.

Intern	Would you like to see the YEC program continue in the future? If so, what about the program would be valuable to future YEC interns?
Intern A	"Yes, of course I would it's really helpful and educational program ☺ We learned a lot about the environmental issues and things we weren't aware of. They would gain knowledge in the environment, E.J., and issues the world has."
Intern B	"Yes I would enjoy to see YEC program thrive in the future because it helps kids come together and learn about agriculture."
Intern C	"yes the learning experience"
Intern D	"Yes I would. I think that all of the skills and knowledge we gain at YEC is exponential valuable in life."
Intern E	"I would love to see YEC continue. I'm glad I applied and would love others to experience what I have these past weeks."
Intern F	"Absolutely! The whole learning process about the world, food industries, about growing foods, is important."
Intern G	"Yes! The most valuable lesson interns learn is that education isn't everything. It provides a good background but the most important thing is people's determination and hard work which is taught here with YEC."
Intern H	"I would like to see the YEC program continue. It would valuable knowledge, practice and experience to the future YEC interns. Especially, how much work is put onto the food that everybody consumes."

Intern I	“I would love to see the YEC program continue. Hands-on learning is something that isn’t given in high schools like mine. I believe that incorporating this teaching method with the importance of environmental awareness is vital to the youth of today. If our youth isn’t informed on what is going on then we, as young people, will be intellectually unable to make change in a world that desperately needs it!”
Intern J	“Yes because there are a lot of information that might be available to YEC interns including food systems, ways on how to grow food and food assessment surveys.”
Intern K	“I would like to see the program continue. The lessons in growing our own food in a sustainable method offer us interns solutions to issues facing the environment thanks to the conventional food system.”

Intern I’s response expressed a serious passion for the work that the YEC curriculum and training does to decolonize minds.

The continuation of YEC curricula during summers is especially important given the fact that many high school students in Pomona, CA do not spend their time productively during the summer. The first question of the 5th week’s survey asks the interns to describe how they would be spending their time if they were not a part of YEC and to also describe how some of their friends spend their time during the summer. The general trend in responses is that the most high school students in Pomona either go to summer school or stay at home and do nothing.

Intern	If you had not gotten a job at YEC, what do you think you would be doing this summer?	What are some of your peers from school doing this summer?
Intern A	“If I hadn’t gotten the job in the YEC program I would be going to summer school to get ahead in credits and have less classes. Also doing community service in the senior center ☺ but I’m so glad I got the job ☺”	“Some of my close peers from school are going to summer school, to get the credits they were behind on or to get ahead on credits and some are just staying home and chillin’ at home.”
Intern B	“Summer school trying to get ahead in the following school year.”	“Summerschool”
Intern C	“Either working somewhere else or doing nothing.”	“Summer school”
Intern D	“I would be staying watching TV, movies or playing video games.”	“They do exactly what I stated above.”
Intern E	“I would be a lazy person at home watching TV, until school started up	“some are at summer school but most of them would be doing nothing.”

	again.”	
Intern F	“Looking for another job, h.w.”	“Summer school, staying home”
Intern G	“I would’ve gone to summer school and volunteered at an elderly home.”	“they are going to summer school and wasting time at parties.”
Intern H	“If I had not gotten a job at YEC I would have gone to summer school and looked for a job at a nearby fast food place.”	“some of my peers are working or just enjoying the summer.”
Intern I	“Honestly, I would be at home watching a lot of television; occasionally tending to some plants in my backyard, as well as my middle school’s organic garden.”	“Some are in summer school. Some are vacationing in other countries. <u>MOST</u> are at home spending their free time on facebook and texting...”
Intern J	“I would probably be lifeguarding.”	“lifeguarding, summer school, enrichment classes.”
Intern K	“I’d probably be reading and doing h.w., but the practical education I am receiving has a different sort of value. Its value is in connecting us, the youth, to the Earth and in educating us on issues w / in our world.”	“Reading, horse riding lessons (as a teacher); nothing as cool as the YEC internship!”

Only one of the interns implicated that there would be a job available if the YEC position had not become available. Only two of the interns talked about looking for community service opportunities. Especially in the current economic climate, when jobs are scarce even for high school graduates, finding a summer job as a high school student can be particularly difficult. For the students who are not enrolled in summer school, it seems as though the summer wastes away.

Conclusion

The YEC program sought to battle environmental injustice, food injustice, and the industrial food system by providing high school youth from Pomona, CA an opportunity to become urban farmers and by facilitating safe spaces for discussion. The program’s mission was also to create a community of activists who would eventually spread their understanding of the urgency to create social change among their communities. From the beginning, the YEC program hoped to provide

the youth with an earth consciousness which would be contagious to their friends and families. The survey responses show that by linking theory and practice, experiential farming environmental justice programs for high school students can positively influence the lives of young people. These results demonstrate the benefits of small scale urban agricultural projects which include high school youth as farm workers and critical thinkers.

Their grasp and understanding of critical issues, their sense of empowerment, and their ability to acquire and retain information about gardening strengthen the argument that programs similar to YEC should continue and expand to include high school students from all over the country. The interns' responses show how small scale hands-on farming environmentally focused programming at the high school level can motivate high school students to take action against the industrial food system and the environmental injustices they see and experience around them. This engagement with critical issues justifies the expansion of programs similar to YEC. YEC's ability to create a group of young aspiring leaders is another reason why programs with similar goals to YEC should continue and expand. Moreover, the survey responses included as part of goal #4 indicate that the interns' high school experiences are inadequate. Their high schools and related curricula do not build community, do not relate to the interns' lives, exert too much pressure through standardized testing, and do not provide personal attention. This data shows the importance of alternative hands-on farming curricula geared towards high school students, which can fill the gaps of the traditional high school experience and show students that they have the power to create change and become leaders.

The daily log of activities and the surveys show that the YEC program was successful in connecting high school students with sustainable food production and issues of social and environmental justice. By the end of the program, the interns did see themselves as urban

farmers, they did get a chance to discuss movements for environmental justice and how their work was a part of this movement. By the end of the program, as demonstrated in the surveys, the interns believed that they could influence and lead their communities towards food justice and environmental justice. A few of them already have, leading the construction of gardens at their high schools. However, YEC was only successful in connecting 11 high school students to urban sustainable farming and movements for social justice. Again, the scope of injustices in society is so daunting that one summer program involving only 11 students cannot solve all of the world's problems.

The ideals which motivated YEC have great potential to influence similar programs and initiatives which provide high school students an opportunity to discuss social and environmental injustices and explore positive alternatives. These initiatives can be successful in many forms. Traditional school curricula and alternative hands on curricula can occur in partnership when school is in session. Schools can open space for students to build their own gardens. Existing farms can open up space and facilitate the involvement of young people as interns. Summer internship programs such as YEC can continue. As vacant urban land is developed for urban farming, high school students can be involved in the initial construction, upkeep, and cultivation of crops.

Although the pilot YEC program was successful, it was not perfect. One of the major shortfalls of the program was that the interns never got a chance to harvest the crops which they worked so hard to plant. Since they didn't experience how productive their seedlings became, it is possible that they don't see themselves as capable farmers. Although they did participate in weekly harvests, they had not planted the plants they harvested from. Future coordinators of youth farm programs should time activities so that students plant in the very beginning days and

have a chance to harvest these same plants before the end of the summer. Another shortfall of the YEC program was that their individual plots were not productive. In addition to the fact that they planted their plots too late in the program to be able to harvest, the interns were not there every day to take care of their plants. Therefore, many of the seeds they planted did not germinate and some of the transplants did not survive. However, preparing and planting their plots did provide the interns with a positive experience of how to start their own gardens.

It is also not my intention to oversimplify the process by which YEC programs will be implemented. The process of creating programs to connect youth with farming and social justice issues will be neither easy nor simple. There are a multitude of political and organizational barriers in opposition to YEC programs, such as securing funding, overcoming liability issues, finding transportation for students and creating legislation to support alternative education programs to name just a few.

However, YEC internships and related programming can be successful if funding these types of programs becomes a priority for those in positions of power, such as law makers, foundations, NGOs, private donors, school board officials, and principals. At the same time, programs to connect high school students with the earth will also spread if those in the grassroots, the parents, teachers, and students themselves give their full support. Although it seems a daunting task to provide the opportunity for all high school students around the country, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or ability to have a YEC experience, it is possible. If we shift our priorities away from funding foreign wars and protecting corporate interests and instead strive to support our communities to create centers for community health, awareness building, and hands on learning, then YEC related programs will expand.

The future of the YEC program is hopeful. Priscilla and I have applied to the Napier Awards for Creative Leadership, offered by the Pilgrim Place community in Claremont. We hope to work with more youth throughout the Inland Empire and San Gabriel Valley, creating an urban agricultural and educational hub at the Earthworks Community Farm in South El Monte, CA. If we receive funding from the Napier Award, hopefully vegetable sales from an Earthworks farm stand will help sustain a YEC program in South El Monte. If the YEC program continues to thrive at Earthworks, I believe that the creation of a YEC nonprofit will help it to grow and reach more high school students.

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*Appendix***Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Job Application**

Applications are due May 15th by email (samlewis18@gmail.com or ppgbassett@gmail.com), in person to Sam Lewis (917-533-0610) or Priscilla Bassett (646-915-2304), or by mail (266 Hartt Place, Claremont, CA 91711).

Name: _____ School and grade year _____
 Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____
 _____ State: _____ Zip _____ Gender _____
 Ethnicity _____ Age _____ Language Spoken at Home _____

Job Description: A six week long paid summer internship program involving a group of twelve high school students from Pomona, Upland, Montclair, and Claremont. This environmentally focused job will include meaningful work, appropriate technology, intergenerational cross cultural knowledge transfers, and wholesome local food. Interns will complete environmentally-focused coursework. The program will meet five times a week at the Pomona College Organic Farm; it will begin the last week of June and end the first week in August. Compensation is \$50 per week. Preference will be given to applicants who are currently in 10th or 11th grade. However, all high school students are welcome to apply.

Responsibilities:

Interns will participate in a wide variety of activities, events, and positive experiences.

1. **Meaningful Work:** Interns will work to grow food and other plants, participate in a food security assessment, make compost, take care of chickens and preserve fallen fruit. Interns will also participate in field trips throughout the greater Los Angeles area.
2. **Appropriate Technology:** Interns will make biodiesel, use a solar panel, cook with a solar oven, build a cobb oven, and construct an aquaponics system.
3. **Wholesome Local Food:** Interns will make lunch for themselves each day of the program using as much as possible the food they have grown.
4. **Intergenerational Cross Cultural Knowledge Transfers:** Academic coursework will include: learning about agriculture, climate change, waste flows, water use, pollution, and energy. Interns will prepare final projects to present at the end of the summer. In addition, guest speakers will come to discuss college preparation and resumes, bee-keeping, soil science, fruit tree care, and ancient farming techniques.

Questions: On a separate sheet (2 page maximum), please neatly write or type your responses to the following questions.

1. How did you find out about this opportunity?
2. Why are you interested in applying for this job?
3. Are you comfortable doing manual labor? Can you lift 40 pounds?
4. What will you do this summer if you are not hired for this job?
5. What key skills, qualifications, and experience can you bring to this position?
6. What would you like to accomplish at this job?

7. Look up “environmental justice.” What does this mean to you?
8. Discuss a situation in which you had to work closely with someone who is different from you. What did you learn from this experience and how did it affect you?
9. Please list one contact (they must be unrelated to you) who can speak about your strengths. Inform this person that you have listed them on this application and include their phone number.

Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Job Application

To get a better idea of the program, this is what a day may look like:

9am Students arrive at Pomona College.

9:15-9:45am Icebreakers and team-building activities.

9:45-11am Hands-on group activity. For example, students will build the compost pile or harvest fruit from trees.

11-11:15am Break for fresh lemonade.

11:15-12pm Gather into four separate project groups. One team will work on the Cobb oven, another on Biodiesel, the third on Aquaponics, while one group will be preparing Lunch.

12-1pm Lunch: enjoying food we have grown and prepared, students are free to barbeque or use the solar oven, baking anything from macaroni and cheese to chocolate chip cookies.

1-3pm Drive to and work at our other farm site to install drip irrigation systems and to begin cultivating crops.

To get a better idea of the program, this is what another day may look like:

9am Students arrive at Pomona College.

9:15-9:45am Icebreakers and team-building activities.

9:45-11 Outside lecturer comes to speak about indigenous plants and native planting techniques.

11-12pm Visit local supermarkets to record food prices and complete food security surveys in order to document food accessibility for a local non-profit.

12-1 Lunch: enjoying food we have grown and prepared, students are free to use the cobb oven to make pizza, for example.

1-2pm Time for research on individual final projects in computer labs at Pomona College’s campus.

2-3pm Debrief and relax! Ask questions like: Why are nutritious foods so expensive and harder to find in communities of color?

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in the Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Internship Program. Let us begin by saying that it has been a very difficult selection process. We received an unprecedented number of applications from qualified applicants. In order to begin building the best team possible, we looked at the various skills, perspectives, and experiences each person brings to the program. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer you a position for the summer, but we would like to add you to our waiting list.

At this time, we have accepted twelve applicants. Should any of them decline our invitation to participate in the program, we will contact you immediately to see if you are still interested in participating as an intern with us this summer.

If we can respond to any questions, please call or email us:

917-533-0610

Samlewis18@gmail.com

ppgbassett@gmail.com

Thank you for your time and effort,

Sam Lewis

Priscilla Bassett

Dear _____,

Congratulations! You have been selected as an intern for the Youth Earth Connections program as part of the Davis Projects for Peace. We trust that your knowledge, skills and experience will contribute greatly to the program.

Job Description: A six week long summer internship program involving a group of twelve high school students from the Pomona Valley. This environmentally focused job will include meaningful work, appropriate technology, intergenerational cross cultural knowledge transfers, and wholesome local food. Interns will also complete environmentally-focused coursework. The program will meet Monday through Friday from 9am until 3pm at the Pomona College Organic Farm; it will begin June 28th and end August 6th. Compensation is \$50 per week.

Responsibilities: Interns will participate in a wide variety of activities, events, and positive experiences.

1. Meaningful Work: Interns will work to grow food and other plants, participate in a food security assessment, make compost, take care of chickens and preserve fallen fruit. Interns will also participate in field trips throughout the greater Los Angeles area.
2. Appropriate Technology: Interns will make biodiesel, use a solar panel, cook with a solar oven, build a cobb oven, and construct an aquaponics system.
3. Wholesome Local Food: Interns will make lunch for themselves each day of the program using as much as possible the food they have grown.
4. Intergenerational Cross Cultural Knowledge Transfers: Academic coursework will include: learning about agriculture, climate change, waste flows, water use, pollution, and energy. Interns will prepare final projects to present at the end of the summer. In addition, guest speakers will come to discuss college preparation and resumes, bee-keeping, soil science, fruit tree care, and ancient farming techniques.

It is important to note that this is a job. Throughout the 6 weeks of the program you will be required to be present, arrive on time, come prepared to work and respect the rules of the community. When we travel to other locations for field trips, you will be a representative of Youth Earth Connections and will have to act accordingly. Failure to do so will result in internship termination.

Accept Job Offer

If you are in agreement with these responsibilities, sign this form and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope to: Youth Earth Connections 170 East 6th Street, Room #228, Claremont, CA

91711, postmarked by June 1st, 2010.

By signing and dating this letter below, I, _____, accept this job offer to become an intern at Youth Earth Connections and agree to the responsibilities outlined above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Phone Number (cell):

Home: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone

Number: _____

Relation to Intern: _____

Decline Job Offer

If you will not be able to commit to the responsibilities outlined above, or if you do not want to participate in the program, sign below and return the form to: Youth Earth Connections 170 East 6th Street, Room #228, Claremont, CA 91711, postmarked by June 1st, 2010. Please respond as soon as possible because there is a waiting list: if you decline, we will offer the position to another student.

By signing and dating this letter below, I, _____, decline this job offer to become an intern at Youth Earth Connections.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

We at Youth Earth Connections hope that you'll accept this job offer and look forward to welcoming you aboard. Your immediate supervisors will be Sam Lewis and Priscilla Bassett. Feel free to call Sam (917-533-0610) or email either of us at (samlewis18@gmail.com or pffbassett@gmail.com), if you have questions or concerns.

Dear _____

Thank you for your interest in the Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Internship Program. Let us begin by saying that it has been a very difficult selection process. We received an unprecedented number of applications from qualified applicants. In order to begin building the best team possible, we looked at the various skills, perspectives, and experiences each person brings to the program.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer you employment for the summer. You definitely had a promising application and displayed a commitment to working with the earth. We encourage you to apply next year and we hope that you have a great summer.

If we can respond to any questions, please call or email us:

917-533-0610

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Thank you for your time and effort,

Priscilla Bassett

Sam Lewis

Week 1, Monday: On June 28th, 2010, the first day of the program, all the interns arrived by 8:50am, ten minutes early. At our meeting spot, Priscilla and I handed out notebooks, nametags, and gloves, and collected liability forms. After walking to the farm, we played a name game in which everyone says their name and a gesture and then everyone repeats this person's gesture. Some of the interns were very shy and some were very outgoing, but in general there were smiles all around and good vibes. After this, we asked each intern to explain why they were interested in getting this internship, and if any of them had ever been on a farm before.

We followed this brief discussion with the Food Project's garden sensory activity. In this activity, we asked the interns to isolate each of their five senses – we asked them to also use all of their five senses to experience this new environment, stressing a transcendence of just experiencing the farm through vision. We encouraged them to also taste, smell, hear, and touch the farm. We explained the activity, and then each intern copied the field matrix into their notebooks. This activity allowed each intern to experience the Pomona Farm space for themselves and process these new surroundings individually.

After the interns gave themselves self-guided tours, Priscilla and I led a formal tour of the East and West side of the Pomona Farm, showing the chickens, the different types of fruit trees, the vermiculture system, the adobe dome, the compost pile, the bees, and the row crops of the east side. At the end of the tour, we played where the wind blows, a energizing game which lets participants know that they have things in common with each other. All participants stand in a circle, with one in the middle of the circle. The person in the center says, for example, “the wind blows for anyone who has two sisters!” Everyone on the outside who has two sisters must then frantically find a new space in the circle, the object is to avoid being alone in the center.

After this game, the interns chose individual plots. Priscilla and I explain what to look for: good sunlight, access to water, consideration what was grown there previously (bonus if there was some sort of nitrogen fixing legume), and moist, dark soil. We then explain the first steps of preparing soil for planting: pull weeds, break up the soil with a shovel or pick axe, and add fertilizer. After this brief tutorial, it was good to see them being enthusiastic about choosing plots and working - after all the discussion they seemed ready to work with tools to break up soil. Some chose to work together, and some alone, but all were focused.

Since they seemed so excited be with their plots, I wanted to let them keep working but Priscilla and I decided that especially on the first day of the program, it was also necessary to keep building group cohesion. Therefore, we gathered and played the most important word activity, in which we go in a circle and each intern explains his or her most important word. After this discussion, Priscilla and I explained that we would paint signs for the new plots. Interns could use their most important word or a picture, or their name. Since the plots were theirs, we explained that the interns could paint whatever they wanted.

After painting, we ate lunch. Some didn't bring lunch, we offer a soup we had made. Priscilla and I apologized for originally advertising the program as including lunch. I tried to be mindful of possible problems this would have caused by saying that if this will be a problem for anyone or their family, please call or speak with us after separately and we can arrange something. During lunch there were a few silences, but we got through them just fine. Priscilla and I brought a pot of soup for the interns who did not have lunch with them.

At the end of lunch we gave a summary of the program to the interns, talking about the different locations and projects we had planned. Then we picked berries, giving the interns their first taste of harvesting for the summer. We followed harvesting with an eye contact game, since many of the interns had written in their ‘all about me forms’ that eye contact makes them feel

comfortable in a group. In this game, participants stand in a circle, with one in the middle. Those standing on the outside of the circle must make eye contact with someone else in the circle and run across the circle to switch places before the person in the middle can take a spot. This was very fun, a great activity.

Then Priscilla and I led the community goals and rules workshop. Interns broke into two groups of five to talk about goals we have as a community, writing these goals on a big sheet of paper. Then the interns wrote their individual goals in their journals. We came back together as a group, and listed our goals as a community. We then asked what would happen if these goals aren't met, and created a series of rules to address these potential problems. Before leaving, we played one last name game where interns threw balls to each other while calling out names. Overall, the first day of the program passed by extremely fast. Even though we spent the majority of the day trying to build group cohesion, we reminded the interns that the next six weeks would include more work. In the beginning, however, it's necessary to create group cohesion and open space for all students to become comfortable being themselves.

Week 1, Tuesday: On the second day of the program, we met at 9am at our regular meeting spot and walked together up to our classroom on Pomona's North Campus. We asked the interns to group into pairs of two on the way there and get to know each other. When we arrived at the classroom, everyone introduced her/his partner and said a couple things about him / her. We then wrote the word 'food' on the board and initiated a brainstorm / free association activity in order to prepare the interns to watch the documentary *Food Inc.* Priscilla and I used a discussion guide which breaks up the movie into different 15 minute sections. The guide provides discussion questions and activities for each section.

We spoke a lot about personal responsibility and accountability. We talked about whether or not we have the right or the privilege to be able to rise up to change the way our food comes to us. As a group, we agreed that we don't know what's in our food or how it's being produced. We asked, do we care about this? Do we have time to care? If we do care, then will we do something about it? What about if we care, but don't have the time or money or citizenship that allows us to act up? We were dealing with some heavy issues, and by reading body language (no slouching, no heads down on tables) I concluded that everyone was interested.

After watching the second section of the movie, we asked them to tell us who all the players in producing chicken are. They came up with: the chicken farmer, the farm worker, the CEO of the chicken company, the government, the food scientist, and the consumer. After prompting, they realized that the chicken was also a player in this system. We asked them to explain how they're all connected and how each player is positively and negatively affected. As a related activity, we asked them to consider who we should hold responsible to inform us about what is in our food – the producers of the food or ourselves or both. We engaged the students and brought energy to the room by asking the interns to form a line, with personal responsibility on one side of the room, producer responsibility on the other, and dual responsibility in the middle. Most chose to stand in the middle, while only two members of the group said the producers have full responsibility to say what is in their food. We encouraged all members of the group to participate by asking the interns to explain why they chose to stand in the spot where they were. It turned out that everyone had different reasons for being in their spots. Throughout this discussion, Priscilla and I pushed the interns to flesh out their arguments by asking the question "why" over and over. We were very honest with the interns and explained that it's better for the youth to come up with the answer themselves rather than us telling them what it is or just about what we think. During a break, Priscilla also encouraged me to speak about the prevalence of

white male voices in the movie – which makes us consider who has the time and privilege to be worrying about these issues.

After watching three sections of *Food Inc*, we got in the vans and drove to the Tri-City Community Garden in Pomona on Garey Avenue, a .5 acre urban garden with fruit trees and vegetable plots. We went inside and ate lunch; then some of the interns wandered around the site and some made watermelon lemonade. Randy Bekendam, the overseer of the Tri-City Garden, introduced himself to the group and told us the long story of Tri-City and why and how he got involved. He originally had the idea to start the Tri-City Garden when a three year old was killed in the crossfire of a gang related shooting. After giving the history of the site and a brief tour, he split us up into groups: some harvested fruit and some removed bermuda grass out of the pathways. We were all especially amazed to see the fruit trees. Even though they're only three years old, they were already producing delicious fruit. The picking group picked all the fruit from four trees and completely filled 12 boxes. We hope that they were able to see those boxes and find value in the work that they just accomplished. We finished the day with another community building activity: we closed our eyes and held hands standing in a circle. We sent a series of hand squeeze pulses around the circle to feel the energy that flowed through us. Even though the interns harvested all the fruit, they took none of it home. Instead, all the fruit went to the Amy's Farm CSA members, who are mostly affluent whites living in Claremont. For Priscilla and I, it did not make sense that Randy could talk about community gardening as a positive response to gang violence and then give the majority of his fruit to rich white families in Claremont.

Week 1, Wednesday: We started the third day of the program with another name game and then gave the interns the freedom to work on their plots. Some got compost to add to plots, some dug up rocks, some made sure that the soil was fluffy. At 11am Carlos Carillo from Uncommon Good and John Bonicorsi, a Pomona College student came to the farm. Carlos gave the interns a survey and asked the interns many questions, mostly about fast food, about how many times a week we eat it, and why we eat it. He talked about how he didn't used to think he could be green because he doesn't have a lot of money. However, he explained that he now knows that he can be 'green' even without a high income. He talked about how there are no fast food restaurants in Claremont but Pomona has many: Claremont has enough tax dollars from homeowners with expensive properties and houses, but Pomona, which lacks revenue from income and property tax, needs extra tax dollars and therefore they encourage the fast food businesses. This perpetuates the placement of fast food restaurants in low income areas and all the health problems associated with frequently eating fast food. Then Carlos gave a broad overview of the Pomona Valley Food Assessment Survey, which hopes to battle this problem by creating an urban farming industry in Pomona.

We followed this discussion with a lunch break, and then the interns broke themselves into groups. We gave each group a seed catalogue and encouraged the interns to explore. During the day, one of the interns talked about the frequent drive by gang shootings on her block. To make conversation, Priscilla asked other interns if they had siblings and what they were up to. Two students talked about their incarcerated siblings.

Week 1, Thursday: We started off the day by doing a plot planning activity, each intern drew their plot and decided what they wanted to plant and where. After this, we explained the difference between transplants and direct seeding, and demonstrated how to transplant and how to plant seeds correctly. With this knowledge, they all worked on their own plots, using the transplants and seeds we had bought for them. They actually spent time really planning and

thinking, showing that they took their plots seriously, that they cared. Three students who finished working on their plots before the others came with me to the east side of the farm to weed a bed of zucchini. As we weeded, we talked about the army. Two of the students said they would consider enlisting, while one of the intern's sisters was about to join. After eating lunch, we played another name game. In this one, two students hold a big curtain and we split into two groups, with one group standing on either side of the curtain. One person from each group stood directly in front of the curtain and after a count down the curtain fell. The person to say the other one's name first is the winner. This was a very good game, filled with lots of laughter. After this game we went to the east side with tools, pulling weeds on the long beds and preparing new beds for planting. It was very hot and some were visibly tired. Even though it was good that they were all talking to each other, some of them weren't working hard. Priscilla and I were working hard, which hopefully served as motivation for them to work, also.

Eventually we put tools down and began our harvest. We picked cucumbers, zucchini, basil, strawberries, blackberries, plums, carrots, onions, and beans. Most of the interns had never seen cucumbers growing, let alone harvest them. They also seemed excited to take the vegetables home to their families, who typically did not have access to this kind of produce.

Week 1, Friday: For the fifth day of the program, the group decided to go on a hike up Mt. Baldy. While we hiked, we prompted the interns to think about how we felt in a space where human intervention is minimal. After lunch, we asked the interns to personally reflect in their journals on the first week of the program in any way, via poetry, a narrative, or a drawing. On the hike it was great to see everyone getting along. By this point, Priscilla and I no longer had to work hard to create conversation among the group – during the hike they fell into conversation themselves. Even though the day was hot, they all enjoyed the experience of being in the mountains hiking along the San Antonio River.

Week 2, Monday: We began the second week of the program with a trip to Amy's Farm in Ontario. Upon arrival we met Lizzy, the lead farmer, and Randy, the general manager of Amy's farm and the Tri-City garden. First, Randy gave us the animal tour of the farm: he showed us the milking cow, the horses, bulls, goats, turkeys, chickens, pigs, and sheep. After this tour, as a group we pulled weeds from a large area of mulch and then weeded three beds of onions. For lunch, we took a break and ate as a group at a line of picnic tables next to the farm's grandma cow, who happily ate the watermelon rinds we gave to her. After this we planted beans and cleared more beds for planting. At the end of the day, Priscilla talked to me about how the students need to see farmers of color – since all the farmers we had worked with so far were white, this could possibly create the idea that being 'green' is just for those who can afford it. In order to challenge this idea, she especially wanted them to see Ali Bhai, who works on youth empowerment projects in LA.

Week 2, Tuesday: In the morning, we mulched the east side of the farm. One group stood at the mulch pile and filled wheelbarrows while the other carted them and dumped them on the east side. They worked hard and efficiently. This activity gave us a good chance to spend time with and talk to each other. Around 11:30 we stopped mulching to start the food systems activity, one of the workshops described by the Food Project. We started the discussion by holding up two potatoes and asking the interns to describe their differences and generate a list of physical differences between the two. Then we told them that one of the potatoes came from a supermarket and the other came from the Pomona farm. With this new piece of information, we then we asked again about the differences. This time, the interns replied with answers such as 'organic,' and we pushed them to use the word 'local.' After this, we offered a definition of a

food system and talked about all the players involved in a food system. After providing this brief description, we broke out into two different groups. We gave one group the local food system cards and quotes and we gave the other group the conventional food system cards and quotes. Each group matched quotes with descriptions of the different players and laid out the cards in order, from farm to consumer. We then joined back together and the two groups explained to each other how their food system functions. By themselves, the interns articulated that conventional food system involves too many different players. Then we showed them the energy used in production sheets and talked how energy is used in the whole system. We discussed energy used to transport, to make fertilizer, to power processing plants, to transport food from store to home, to power cooking appliances, to power farm equipment, and so on. At this point in the discussion it was past lunchtime and we still hadn't gotten to the last part of the activity, and so Priscilla and I stopped and asked if everyone was bored or hungry or if they wanted to keep going. We were very surprised to hear virtually all of them say yes enthusiastically. The fact that they put their hunger aside spoke to the fact for the need for this kind of information for young people. We hope that they realized the gravity of what they heard, and the fact that they put off lunch to hear more tells me how important it is to raise these issues. Eating is relevant to all of us, yet we do not know how the food is produced or what it means for the earth.

In part three of the exercise. Priscilla wrote the word "impact" on the flipchart. We asked, "What are the impacts on people, the economy, and the environment. I think that writing the word impact really brought everything together for them. We ended the discussion by talking about relevancy and by asking why is the work that we're doing here in YEC relevant? The group decided that learning to grow your own food is an appropriate response to the conventional food system. After lunch, we worked on the east side beds, formed pathways, and pulled weeds.

Week 2, Wednesday: We started off the day with a quick check in, asking if your week so far was a color, what would the color be? While they all watered their plots, an intern who had just joined the group picked a plot and started working on it. Without asking for help, five other interns came and started to help him, showing real community and real teamwork. It was so nice to see them working together and helping each other out. At ten, a science teacher and garden coordinator from Fremont Middle School arrived to lead an activity on the no-till cultivation method. First, we took dead plant material from the west side compost pile and put it in wheel barrows and walked as a group over to the east side. We worked on two separate beds, and started by piling dead plant material, grass clippings, manure, straw, and then manure again. After wetting it all down we piled compost on top. We layed drip tape and planted corn, beans, and squash seeds. It felt good to be learning with the interns – to step out of the role of teacher. However, our guest leader's actions were problematic, and showed me that we still live in a patriarchal society. He kept talking to me as if was the sole leader of the group, neglecting the fact that Priscilla was also leading the group. This was a wake-up call for me. If Priscilla had not said anything, I would not have realized how the guest's actions were disrespectful to Priscilla. This showed me that I, along with the interns, needed to question my placement and role in society. After lunch, a member of the Claremont community who spends time at The Farm, came to do a double-digging demonstration to show how there are multiple techniques for planting. At the end of the day the interns asked what we had planned for the next day, showing their excitement for another day.

Week 2, Thursday: As we waited for our van in the morning, we played the 'wa' game and the pushing hands game until 9:30. We got in our two vans and drove to the Caly Poly

Pomona Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies for a tour. Our tour guide talked a lot and seemed to be more interested in the buildings (i.e. passive heating and cooling, the TJ house, the stawbale house) We saw fruit trees, vegetable beds, massive solar panels, goats, turkeys, and the biodiesel building. Upon our request, our guide also talked about how undergraduates can be involved at the Lyle Center, and stressed that Cal Poly is a Calstate public university. Around 11:30 we drove back to Claremont and ate lunch. We went to the east side for a greenhouse and seed planting activity in plastic trays. Here, the interns learned why and how to start seeds in the greenhouse. We followed this planting activity with another harvest and the interns divided up vegetables to take home. We ended the day with our haidookan game, with lots of good energy and laughter.

Week 2, Friday: The interns met at Tri City for a tree pruning workshop. A fruit tree pruning ‘expert’ gave a talk about summer tree pruning, grafting, and irrigating. The Pomona College farm manager, Juan Araya came with us asked lots of questions (not for himself, but for the sake of the YEC kids). The tree pruning expert was very rude to Juan, and assumed that he was ignorant about agronomy, presumably because Juan is Latino. The expert did not realize that the youth were there also to learn, that the questions Juan was asking might also be useful to other students. This seemingly small event continues to demonstrate the pervasive nature of racism in every day occurrences and interactions.

As we pruned the trees and cleared the branches from the ground, we all ate lots of delicious peaches. The expert then gave a talk about the espalier method of tree pruning. We continued work by weeding beds of onions which had been consumed by weeds. As we worked, Juan was there with us, singing and radiating upbeat energy. We took a break for lunch and Juan brought us a big bag of plums from his tree. After lunch, some of the interns set up drip irrigation. The rest of us continued weeding onions and clearing weeds to make way for community plots. As we worked, I also hoped that they weren’t getting tired of weeding onions, that they saw some significance in doing this work – I hoped that they related our discussion about local and conventional food systems with weeding onions and pruning trees, which may start to seem tedious.

Week 3, Monday: We started our day at Amy’s farm by playing the bird beast fish game and began work by weeding onions. Gradually, Lizzy took pairs of interns from the onions to start on other projects: some drove down posts to trelace beans, some cut off onion tops, some tilled beds for planting corn. Eventually, all of us worked to till the beds to get ready to plant corn. During our lunch break, one intern wanted to throw away her big piece of chicken after getting it dirty and flies on it, but I used this as an opportunity to talk about wasting food. I asked, ‘what about the farmer who grew the feed for the chicken, and the fuel to get the feed to the chicken and the fuel to get the chicken to market etc etc.’

After lunch as we gathered for the next work activity, Randy kept calling out to me, acknowledging me as the only leader of the group. He had also addressed me in this way the Friday before, and seeing the pain on Priscilla’s face, I knew that it was disrespectful and unacceptable for me to remain silent. Looking back, I realize that to silently acquiesce to Randy’s behavior is to condone and support patriarchy. Even though I talked to him and asked that he acknowledge both of us as leaders, the conversation did not go well. I only realized this after discussing the conversation with Priscilla a few days later.

After lunch, we collected eggs from the chickens. Then Lizzy gave us a tour of her various compost piles. We formed beds by digging furrows, and then some set up the drip tape while the rest of us cleared a forest of weeds. After planting corn, we got back in vans to go

home. Lizzy also gave us lots of produce: calabaza, swiss chard, cucumbers, and onions. These vegetables not only showed the interns that their work was appreciated, but that they were active participants in a local food system.

Week 3, Tuesday: We began the day by playing a game in which participants must organize themselves in a line by birthday without any oral communication. After this, we worked to put and spread mulch on the west side of the Pomona farm. As a group, we walked to the Skyspace on the Pomona College Campus and ate lunch. Together we went to our classroom and asked the interns where they get their news, if at all. Hearing their responses, Priscilla and I decided that it was necessary to show headlines for democracy now!

We followed our short talk about the media with a brainstorm session around climate change. We watched a short movie narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio about climate change. We asked for reactions to this short clip. Then we played a short clip produced by Media That Matters about the Carteret islands, which are sinking due to rising sea levels. For a discussion question we asked: what is being lost in the Carteret Islands? When no more interns had comments to add, we brainstormed around the words climate debt, and eventually the interns defined the term themselves. After making sure that everyone understood what climate debt means, we watched clips from Democracy Now! featuring Angelica Navarro, Naomi Klein, and Kumi Naidoo who all spoke about different aspects of climate debt and climate reparations. Throughout the discussion, we discussed why climate debt is relevant to our lives. We asked who is 'us' and 'them'? Are all of 'us' responsible for the harmful effects of climate change and will all of 'us' feel the effects equally? Which ones of 'us' will be able to cope most effectively?

Week 3, Wednesday: We began the day by summarizing the previous day's conversation about climate change and climate debt. Together we walked to the East side of the Pomona farm and split into three groups. Since we had been doing so much weeding, Priscilla and I wanted to show the interns that there is more to farming than just pulling weeds. The interns split themselves into three groups, with one group sifting compost, one group weeding tomatoes, and one group trellising tomatoes after a brief trellising training. After a water break, we came together and planted a bed which we had previously prepared, using the compost which one of the groups had just sifted. After lunch, we played the 60-seconds identity game. In this activity, each intern takes 60 seconds to make a list of ten things that make them angry, then ten seconds to make a list of things that make them sad, and then a list of ten things that make them happy. After we all completed our lists, we went around and shared one thing from each list. Interns mentioned wasting food, their pregnant friends, and friends turning to drugs. We followed this heavy discussion with the compost family feud game. This game allowed the interns to demonstrate their knowledge of how to build a compost pile. Priscilla and I did only tell the interns about what makes a successful compost pile, the interns were also able to experience making the pile for themselves. Interns watered their plots and went home.

Week 3, Thursday: We spent the morning at the Pomona Farm split up into two groups. One group went to the East side with Priscilla while I stayed with the other group on the West side as they made cookies to put in the solar oven. We all joined on east side and tilled a large area and dug pathways to make four new beds for planting. After lunch, the interns took the cookies from the solar oven, we ate them, the interns watered their plots, and then as a group we walked to Pomona College's computer lab. Priscilla and I introduced the individual projects. Except for one intern, they all seemed genuinely excited to start their projects and pick their topics.

Week 3, Friday: We spent the day at Huntington Beach for a nice day of relaxation.

Week 4, Monday: We spent the day at Amy's Farm, pulling large weeds, making beds, planting corn, and setting up drip tape.

Week 4, Tuesday: In the morning interns worked on their individual plots. Eddie Casarez, from the Glendora garden, came with blueberry acai smoothies, talked about shiva, his background from Fresno growing up picking fruit with his parents, who were farm workers. When Eddie left, Priscilla and I led an identity workshop: each person wrote a personal problem on an index card, folded up the card, and put it in a hat. We went around and each person picked a card at random from the hat and read the problem aloud to the group. Then as a group we gave advice, talked about how to cope with that problem. After this discussion, we ate lunch at the skyspace and the interns worked in the computer lab researching for their individual projects. After this we got in vans and went to two local supermarkets to price index food items for the Pomona Valley Food Security Assessment Survey.

Week 4, Wednesday: In the morning we drove to the Glendora Church of the Brethren's small garden. The interns met Eddie, Stephanie, and Annette, the overseers of the garden. We started the day with the name gesture game and name gesture game. We split in two groups: one group worked on mulching the garden, while the second group unloaded sand for the cobb oven. Then we come together at the site's other garden started building the foundation for the cobb oven with stones and cement. For lunch, Eddie made delicious food for us – beans, tortillas, eggs with squash, yam greens, and kale, tomatoes with papalo, and queso blanco. The lunch was not only delicious but Eddie used food from the garden to make it. We split in two groups again – one group cleaned up around the cob oven and harvested onions and the others finished mulching.

Week 4, Thursday: Screening and related discussion about *The Garden*. In the afternoon we went to the farm – one group harvested vegetables while the other group cooked omelets using the food the harvesters picked.

Week 4, Friday: In response to the documentary, on Friday we drove to Bakersfield to visit the South Central Farmers.

Week 5, Monday: In the morning, the interns completed surveys and debriefed about their experience during the previous week. The students mulched on the East side of the farm and in groups of four they also moved transplants from small trays to bigger pots to go back in the greenhouse. After lunch, we met in the dome to talk prepare for our meeting with RootDown, a youth empowerment group based in LA. We planned student group to make presentations to the other, so that they could share the different types of knowledge they have. The interns picked topics to present on. We walked to the computer lab, where interns researched for their individual projects and presentations.

Week 5, Tuesday: Since the meeting with RootDown was cancelled, we met at the Pomona Farm at the regular time. Each group gave their presentation anyway: Three interns talked about Environmental Justice and the global impacts of community gardening. Two interns talked about the no till vs. French intensive cultivation techniques. Two interns talked about how to prepare a plot for planting. Two other interns explained crop rotation. After these presentations, we went to the East side and made six new beds. This was a very productive time, and all the interns worked really hard. After lunch, we walked to our classroom and did a brainstorm session about saving seeds. We followed this discussion by screening *The Semillas Project* movie, which featured the interview of an indigenous woman from Ecuador. One intern said that she had never seen a non-white Spanish speaking woman on TV before, and appreciated

this new perspective. We also talked about genetically modified seeds, preserving cultural tradition through seeds, and the importance of saving seeds.

Week 5, Wednesday: We drove to Glendora and played the where the wind blows game. After the game, we immediately began work on our cobb oven. We started by building up the base, then filled glass bottles with sand, then dug dirt and sift it, added clay to the dirt, and mixed the dirt and clay with water. We tested our mixture to make sure it was the right texture, added sawdust to the mix, and added it on to the base on top of the glass bottles. We leveled off the base and laid bricks on the flat surface. We added sand on top of the bricks to make the form for the dome. After this, we mixed another dirt clay mixture and added it on top of the sand.

Week 5, Thursday: We started off the day by playing the human knot. Then we split into two groups: one group worked on mulching and pruning the grape and blackberry vines while the other group formed a new bed. After lunch, we went around in a circle and each intern gave a brief description of the presentation they had prepared for the upcoming potluck dinner.

Week 5, Friday: In the morning the interns completed surveys about the past week, and then as a group we went to the biodiesel shed, where I gave a brief tutorial about how to make biodiesel. The interns practiced their presentations, watered their plots, and went home early to continue working on their presentations.

Week 5, Sunday: As a final project, the interns each researched and presented on an issue that most interested them at a potluck dinner to which all families were invited. At the dinner, each student brought a dish featuring something they had helped to grow and harvest from the Pomona College Farm. By choosing their own topics, the interns connected to issues central to their lives, thus providing depth and motivation to their work. Presentations included: the construction of a bicycle-powered compost sifter, home-scale greenhouse design, the construction of a cardboard box solar oven, a model of a food desert surrounding Bell High School in Los Angeles, a speech about environmental degradation, a speech about the harmful effects of Styrofoam, a speech about environmental racism, and a speech about adobe construction. Through these presentations the interns began to envision themselves also as teachers and leaders spreading knowledge to their families about social justice and care for the earth. It was valuable for the interns' parents to see the work they had been doing, and it was fulfilling to see the parents' proud faces.

There are some ironies of a farming program which recruits students from predominantly first and second generation Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran communities. The first day of the program, we had a conversation with the interns about their families' farms in countries of origin. We asked if any of them had ever been on a farm before, and three of the interns mentioned visiting grandparents who have farms in Mexico and waking up early to do farm work. Also, some of the YEC parents know a lot about farming and gardening. So for some of the YEC interns, there might have been some dilemmas because they haven't gotten farm and gardening skills their parents grew up with. Although this is purely speculative, in thinking about the disconnect in agrarian knowledge transfers, it is possible that some migrants are trying to avoid farm work because a lot of people associate this work with hunger, contract crews, low pay, and job insecurity. Even given these realities, I did not get a sense that their parents were leery of having their kids spend a lot of time learning farm work. The majority of the feedback they gave was about their enthusiasm to receive the fresh vegetables from the weekly harvests. Because of the irony outlined above, in the future establishment of YEC programs, there is definitely possible tension over farm-based curricula in places where programs recruit interns in Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran communities.

Week 6, Monday: In the morning we met the beekeeper, put on the beekeeping suits, and learned about the bees and how the bee boxes are arranged. Then we walked to Pomona's campus and met Sergio Marin, from the Draper Center for Community Partnerships. We played the human bingo game and the candy bar introduction game so that Sergio could get to know the interns. After this, Priscilla and I led a tour of Pomona College, visiting the Draper Center, the biology building, the Office of Black Student Affairs, the Blaisdell dormitory building, and the Gibson dormitory. We ate lunch at Frank, and then met Sergio in a classroom for a discussion about diff types of college and what students need to go to college.

Week 6, Tuesday: In the morning, we drove to the Olinda Alpha landfill trash dump. A worker at the dump gave us a tour of the landfill in a large van. We saw the large machines which mixed trash with dirt. This was a surreal sight for all of us – none of us realized how much trash American society produces until we drove up a mountain created by trash. The mountain was so high that we could see the ocean from the top of it. We drove back to the Pomona Farm for lunch. We split into three groups: one group sifted compost, another formed beds, and another tilled beds. After this Priscilla and I talked about companion planting and then planted four beds with corn, beans, and squash.

Week 6, Wednesday: In the morning we drove to Glendora and finished constructing our cobb oven. To celebrate, Stephanie gave a demonstration about making pizza dough and then we chopped wood, built a fire in the oven, and cooked pizza.

Week 6, Thursday: We spent the second to last day of the program at Amy's Farm. We weeded and thinned the corn we had planted, we planted potatoes, trellised beans, weeded cilantro beds, and planted okra. Lizzy was very considerate and went out of her way to give us work besides clearing large weeds. By showing us how to plant potatoes, she gave us a more diverse experience of being on a vegetable farm. We also appreciated all the vegetables which Lizzy gave to the interns to take home.

Week 6, Friday: On the very last day of the program, the interns filled out surveys and then we planted our last beds. By the end of the summer, the interns had prepared and planted 13 beds at the Pomona Farm. After working we harvested greens for our salad, and together we ate a homemade meal. To end on a happy note, we had a water balloon fight. As a last activity, each intern got a chance to make personal remarks to the group without anyone else speaking. Holding a talking stick made of rosemary and flowers, the interns talked about how the internship had changed them – many also talked about the new friends they had made. Priscilla and I expressed our appreciation for them with two books: 500 years of Chicano History in Pictures and Gaia's garden. Before we said our goodbyes we signed each other's books.

Individual Projects Guidelines Handout

July 15th, 2010 YEC End of the Summer Projects

Things to Consider

people involved / effects on people - resources involved - effects on environment - effects on the future - brief history of the subject at hand - related to environmental justice?

solutions? - each YEC intern will give a 5-10 minute presentation at the family potluck on July 31st. - this is not a graded assignment - you may choose a topic that is not included on the list below - project does not necessarily need to be in english

Types of Projects

Art: photo, film, paint, draw, sing, rap, poetry, dance

research paper

pamphlet / flier

poster

building project

make a book

cook a meal

Ideas for Possible Projects

food justice

air pollution

frights of farm workers

toxic waste / toxic contamination / toxic communities

landfills

school lunch program

community gardens for community, peace, and justice

'green' entrepreneurs

environmental racism

eco socialism

basics about how to grow food

food systems

climate refugees

climate debt

health benefits of eating food you've grown

alternative vehicles

alternative energy

principles of environmental justice

ancient ways of growing food

peak oil

movements for a better future

famous farmers

famous environmental justice activists

the land institute / multifunctional farming

bakersfield / south LA farmers

oral history of family (relating to environmental justice, farming, food...)

CAFOs and effects on people and land

ecofeminism

green jobs

Survey Consent Form: Pomona College Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Summer Internship Program

The survey you are being asked to participate in is part of a project to assess the utility of environmental education curricula and green job training at the high school level. It is 6 questions long and should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please contact Samuel Lewis at 917-533-0610 or samlewis18@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation.

RISKS

Questions may be asked that touch on subjects you find sensitive. You are *not* required to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable doing so and are *not* required to release any information about yourself that you don't feel comfortable releasing. All the information you provide, unless you specifically request that it not be used, may be used in this study. You may stop the survey at any time and request that I erase any or all of the information. Your identity will not be recorded.

BENEFITS

The results of this study may be used to promote green job training and environmental education initiatives at high schools around the USA. The information you provide will be a great help to this study.

COST/COMPENSATION

There will be no cost and no compensation to you as a participant in this study.

PARTICIPANT AUTHORIZATION

I have read or had the terms above read to me and understand the risks and benefits of this study. I understand that participation is voluntary and choose to participate.

Signature

Date

WEEK #1 SURVEY FORM

1. What did you enjoy about the activities this week and what did you dislike?
2. Have you learned any skills this week? What are they?
3. Will you use any of these skills in the future?
4. What are your perceptions about what you have learned from your classes at school compared to the knowledge and skills you have learned from this summer internship program so far?
5. How concerned are you about the natural world and climate change? Circle one:
Extremely Concerned Concerned Not Concerned at all
6. How do issues raised in the film (and discussed by the group) about the USA's food system pertain to your life and your community?

WEEK #2 SURVEY FORM

1. What have you liked about this week? What have you disliked about this week?
2. Compare the typical class size in your high school to the number of interns in the Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Summer Internship Program. If the smaller number of interns at YEC better facilitates your learning, please explain how.
3. Please share some of your thoughts on the different impacts of the different food systems we have discussed together. (Reminder: we discussed conventional/industrial and local food systems; impacts of these food systems affect people and the environment)
4. What have you learned this week that is relevant to your life?
5. How enthusiastic are you about what you are learning in your high school classes? Rate your enthusiasm on a 1-10 scale, 10 being most enthusiastic.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How enthusiastic are you about what you are learning in the Cultivating Youth Earth Connections Summer Internship Program? Rate your enthusiasm on a 1-10 scale, 10 being most enthusiastic.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Do you feel confident that you could start your own garden?

WEEK #3 SURVEY FORM

1. What did you like about this past week?
2. What would you like to do more of?
3. What did you dislike about this past week?
4. We are at the midpoint in the program. Have any activities or discussions impacted the way you now think or things you do? Please give a specific example.
5. Please compare your classroom environment at school to the learning environment at YEC. For example, your instructors, peers, atmosphere of the class, etc.
6. What are some things you hope to learn in the next three weeks?
7. Some of you have talked about regular and mandatory standardized testing at your schools. Please discuss how this affects your education. Please compare those feelings with your feelings about the YEC education.
8. The first day of the program you wrote down some of your individual goals. Can you comment on those goals? Have you reached any of those goals? Have any of them become irrelevant? Have you developed any new goals for yourself?
9. What hopes do you have for YEC as a community over the remaining three weeks?
10. How will you apply your new skills and knowledge in the future?
11. How will you apply your skills and knowledge gained from your school in the future?

WEEK #4 SURVEY FORM

Refresher - Monday: amy's farm, Tuesday: individual plots, eddie comes with smoothies, problem activity, computer lab, supermarkets, Wednesday: glendora and cobb oven and lunch, Thursday: the garden movie and then harvest and cook our own lunch, Friday: visit the south central farmers in Bakersfield

1. What did you enjoy about this past week?
2. What does food justice mean to you? Is food justice important? Why or why not?
3. What does environmental justice (EJ) mean to you? Is EJ important? Why or why not?
5. In what ways do you think you are/can be a part of the movement for food justice or environmental justice?
6. Do you feel personally connected to the topics you learn at school?
7. Do you feel personally connected to the topics you're learning about at YEC?
6. Do you feel prepared to teach others what you have learned at YEC?

WEEK #5 SURVEY FORM

Recap: Monday – recap to Bruce about Bakersfield, mulch party on the east side, computer lab for individual projects. Tuesday – presentations, prepared 6 new beds, semillas project. Wednesday – Cobb oven at Glendora. Thursday – pruning berries and forming new bed, individual plots, prepare for presentations. Friday – practice presentations

1. What did you like about this week?
2. If you had not gotten a job at YEC, what do you think you would be doing this summer?
3. What are some of your peers from school doing this summer?
4. Have you ever discussed or read about social justice issues at school? If so, what were they? Were those issues relevant to you?
5. Would you like to see the YEC program continue in the future? If so, what about the program would be valuable to future YEC interns?
6. What are your opinions about the environmental injustice related to indigenous seed saving and the response of the semillas project?

WEEK #6 SURVEY FORM

Survey for Week 6. In this final survey, for each question please write at least 2 sentences. We appreciate you and your thoughts.

1. What did you think of the Olinda Alpha land fill?
2. On Monday, Sergio provided a brief informational session about college and different paths after high school. Does your high school provide the same kind of informational sessions or support? Do you now feel knowledgeable about opportunities after high school? Do you feel confident about pursuing your educational or career goals?
3. After six weeks, how has being a part of YEC influenced your educational, career, and life goals?
4. Please list five things you've learned at YEC that you're excited to share with others and briefly explain each one.
5. What is one thing you've learned here that you are excited to confidently teach somebody else? Why?
6. During our time at YEC, we've been learning about destructive ways of living, how to disengage from them and how we can [re]create healthier ways of living as a community. To you, how does the cobb oven we built (for example) work to disengage from the mainstream and reconnect with healthier living?
7. During YEC, we've looked critically at the way most people in this country live. Wanting to live differently can sometimes create tension between us and our friends and families. Have you experienced this? What are some ways we can work through these problems and continue to find connections?
8. What are some ways that we have participated in meaningful work, and what are some ways we can continue to do this as citizens of the world?
9. YEC has been guided by these four principles: wholesome local food, meaningful work, appropriate technology, intergenerational cross-cultural knowledge transfers; after 6 weeks, in what ways have you seen these principles benefit our working and learning together? Is there any principle you would add to this list?
10. As the YEC community, do you think that we have been working towards social justice? How?