

ELEVATING YOUTH VOICES

Imagine a youth development center designed by underserved students with programs that match their interests and needs. That center is Youth Uprising (YU).

Created in response to unsafe neighborhoods, poor educational resources and rising unemployment rates, youth from East Oakland's Castlemont High School, in partnership with Alameda County and the City of Oakland, renovated a vacant building into a facility that houses performing and digital arts studios and a café, as well as a child-care and health-and-wellness center.



Youth Uprising



“There are different ways to transform and develop a community,” explains Executive Director Olis Simmons. “Youth Uprising programs help harness the power of young people, keep them safe, and create resources and opportunities that will allow them to develop into thriving members of the community.”

The 25,000 square foot, state-of-the-art building offers a wide range of programs for youth aged 13–24. Students gain job skills and become social entrepreneurs while employed by the full-service, student-operated Internet café and catering business, Corners Café.

T-Royal, a 22-year-old and once a troubled teen, used the video and vocal engineering studios located in the Media Arts Center to record his spoken word piece, “Bring the Peace Back.” “YU can reach youth and give them opportunities to grow and make good decisions that will put them in better positions,” says T-Royal, now a YU employee.

YU provides both drop-in and structured youth development classes, and has created 200 jobs since opening its doors in 2005. A grant from Clorox helps YU continue valuable career and education programs for Oakland’s resilient youth.