Since 2008, The LiFEsports Initiative has served approximately 5,000 Columbus youth. Through the LiFEsports Summer Camp, year-round LiFEsports clinics, the LiFEsports Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), university coursework, and innovative research, LiFEsports continues to make a difference in the lives of youth and their families in Central Ohio. Every year the LiFEsports Initiative establishes new goals and expectations to further our mission of delivering quality youth development programs to Columbus youth. This year LiFEsports met one of its major annual goals by expanding our college and career readiness program, the YLA, to serve 57 high school youth. As a result, three cohorts of Youth Leaders, ages 15-18 who were former LiFEsports campers, had opportunities to engage in tailored college and career training sessions, gain valuable work experience at our LiFEsports Summer Camp, and give back to their communities by hosting a youth-led community outreach event. As we take time to reflect back on the year, we are proud of our Youth Leader's commitment and dedication to LiFEsports and to becoming leaders in their homes, schools, and communities!

Our success with the YLA and other LiFEsports priorities is dependent upon the contributions of many. As such, we want to recognize the immense support the YLA has received from our community and university partners. For example, youth attended informative careers visits with the OSU Department of Athletics, OSU Office of Outreach and Engagement, Huntington National Bank, and the Columbus Blue Jackets. The University of Cincinnati (UC) and The Ohio State University (OSU) graciously hosted our youth for college visits. Faith Mission, a local homeless shelter in Columbus, also welcomed our youth into their facility so Youth Leaders could carry out their culminating event – a clothing drive for homeless adults. We are so thankful for the support of these vested partners!

In addition, the YLA would not be as successful without contributions from our youth and their families. We want to thank parents for their support and countless hours transporting youth to and from the YLA. Likewise, we must thank our volunteers (such as Matthew Flamer and Marcellus Upshaw) who dedicate their time and resources, as well as acknowledge key staff members (Luke O'Quinn, Samantha Bates, and Aaron Nelson) who work diligently to support our Youth Leaders.

As a final note, we encourage you to read our YLA annual review to see all of the exciting things that took place in 2015-2016. Similarly, if you are interested in learning more about the LiFEsports Initiative, we encourage you to come to one of our sport-based clinics, volunteer at a YLA session, or read one of our latest research publications. However, if you want to truly experience LiFEsports and see the impact of the YLA, please come to our LiFEsports Summer Camp. Again, we thank our many partners, and welcome others to join in our efforts!

Sincerely,

Jerome Davis, PhD
Executive Director – Service & Outreach

Dawn Anderson-Butcher, PhD, LISW-S
Executive Director – Teaching & Research

Rebecca Wade-Mdianvan, MSW, LISW-S
Director of Operations

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LiFEsports INITIATIVE

Learning in Fitness and Education through Sports (LiFEsports) is a sport-based positive youth development initiative at The Ohio State University (OSU). The LiFEsports Initiative is built upon a historical community outreach program operating at OSU for the past 40 years, the National Youth Sport Program (NYS). Originally developed in 1968, NYS was designed to provide economically disadvantaged children and adolescents, ages 9-17, with sport and education instruction in a safe and nurturing environment during the summer months. OSU was one of the original NYS, but in 2006 all federal funding was cut to support this program. Following this funding cut, the OSU College of Social Work and Department of Athletics partnered to enhance and develop the LiFEsports Initiative.

Today, LiFEsports is not just a camp, it is a university-wide youth development initiative. Each year LiFEsports reaches over 600 youth through year-round sport clinics, a 19 day summer camp, and related programming. LiFEsports serves as a model for others, showcasing how universities in partnership with their community can support student and student-athlete learning, promote research on best practices, and make a difference in the lives of many.

In 2012, LiFEsports noticed a growing and alarming trend. Youth attending the annual summer camp were “aging out” of LiFEsports. At age 15, youth were no longer able to attend the traditional sports camp but still had a growing desire to be a part of LiFEsports. Given this interest, LiFEsports developed and implemented the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), a college and career readiness program, to ensure that older youth involved in LiFEsports remain engaged and have opportunities to prepare for post-high school graduation. In 2015-2016, the YLA was offered to 57 Youth Leaders. The following annual review overviews the 2015-2016 YLA, as well as highlights program outcomes associated with YLA participation.

OVERVIEW OF THE LiFEsports YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (YLA)

Today’s workforce requires young people to have a high school diploma, prior work experience, and in the case of most careers, a college degree. Given these requirements, communities must begin preparing youth to be college and career ready upon high school graduation. One avenue to support this transition into adulthood involves maximizing youth experiences in the summer and out-of-school time. Recognizing the need for quality out-of-school programming to support college and career readiness, The OSU LiFEsports Initiative developed the LiFEsports YLA in 2012.

The YLA seeks to expand on the important skills taught at the original LiFEsports Summer Camp (i.e., Self-control, Effort, Teamwork, and Social Responsibility; S.E.T.S.) by providing older youth (ages 15-18) with additional educational, leadership, and work experiences. The YLA is comprised of three phases: 1) college and career readiness training sessions; 2) an applied internship experience during the annual LiFEsports Summer Camp; and, 3) the culminating event. College and Career Readiness Training Sessions. The first phase of the YLA consists of eight sessions focused on career and college readiness skills. Session activities are geared toward helping youth prepare for college and the workforce. For example, youth create resumes, complete mock college applications, and learn about different majors and associated career paths. Youth Leaders also attend career visits, such as those with Huntington Bank and the OSU Athletic Department, to

“Being a youth leader has helped me gain so many skills. I have gained skills in leadership, communication, and learned how to take responsibility for my actions. These skills have not only helped me in camp, but also outside of camp.”

Devay Butler
2015 LiFEsports Youth Leader of the Year
learn about job opportunities in a variety of fields. Similarly, Youth Leaders attend college visits to OSU and other Ohio universities where they tour a campus, view college dormitories, and learn about university resources/educational programs. This year Youth Leaders visited and toured the University of Cincinnati. Applied Internship Experience. During the second phase, Youth Leaders are involved in applied work experiences targeted toward career readiness at the annual LiFEsports Summer Camp. It is in this phase that youth demonstrate their ability to apply the skills learned throughout the year. Specifically, Youth Leaders serve as junior camp counselors at the LiFEsports Summer Camp, working approximately 32 hours a week for four weeks. Youth Leaders receive on-the-job training, as well as participate in Huntington Bank financial management modules designed to improve financial literacy.

Culminating Event. During the final phase of the YLA, Youth Leaders design and implement a final culminating project. This final phase is youth-led and allows youth to demonstrate the skills needed to be successful at work, college, and in postsecondary education. YLA leaders design and implement a final culminating project. This phase that youth demonstrate their ability to apply the skills learned throughout the year.

THE IMPACT OF THE LiFEsports YLA

Each year the LiFEsports Initiative establishes new goals to further our three pillars – Service & Outreach, Teaching & Learning, and Research. This year we took huge steps forward in serving our youth, college and to learn about university resources/educational programs. This year Youth Leaders visited and toured the University of Cincinnati. Applied Internship Experience. During the second phase, Youth Leaders are involved in applied work experiences targeted toward career readiness at the annual LiFEsports Summer Camp. It is in this phase that youth demonstrate their ability to apply the skills learned throughout the year. Specifically, Youth Leaders serve as junior camp counselors at the LiFEsports Summer Camp, working approximately 32 hours a week for four weeks. Youth Leaders receive on-the-job training, as well as participate in Huntington Bank financial management modules designed to improve financial literacy.

Culminating Event. During the final phase of the YLA, Youth Leaders design and implement a final culminating project. This final phase is youth-led and allows youth to demonstrate the skills needed to be successful at work, college, and in postsecondary education. YLA leaders design and implement a final culminating project. This phase that youth demonstrate their ability to apply the skills learned throughout the year.

Demographics. During 2015-2016, 57 youth participated in the YLA. In total, 98% of Youth Leaders were previous participants in the LiFEsports Summer Camp. Youth Leaders represented 30 different high schools in the Columbus area. Nearly 70% of Youth Leaders attended Columbus Public schools. In relation to gender, 38% of youth were female and 62% were males (ages 15-18). In regards to race, 93% of Youth Leaders identified themselves as Black or African American, 5% as multiple races, and 2% as White/Caucasian. In addition, 82% of Youth Leaders and their families reported currently living at or below 200% of the poverty line.

Attendance. Youth consistently attended YLA programming in the 2015-2016 year. Youth Leaders attended an average of 5.76 sessions out of the 8 program sessions offered. Furthermore, each session averaged approximately 42 Youth Leaders in attendance. The college visit to the University of Cincinnati received the highest attendance rate of the year as 51 youth embarked on this trip with LiFEsports staff. Additionally, 45% of the Youth Leaders worked the annual LiFEsports Summer Camp.

Program Outcomes. Youth Leaders completed pre-, mid-, and post-program surveys designed to explore the overall impact of the program. To better understand the program impact, the Youth Leader surveys were grouped into Year 1 (those students who had never attended any version of the YLA in previous years), and Year 2 & 3 Youth Leaders (those students who had previously attended the YLA). It is important to note that pre-program surveys took place at the YLA Kick-Off (N = 47), mid-program surveys took place after the eight program sessions (N = 41), and post-program surveys were administered after the completion of the LiFEsports summer camp (N=36).

Figure 1 depicts the growth of all Youth Leaders over the course of the program, and showcases that all cohorts demonstrated growth from pre- to post-test in skills such as identity/strengths awareness, goal-setting behaviors, teamwork, citizenship, and college and career self-efficacy.

Figure 2 captures the impact the YLA had on Year 2 & 3 Youth Leaders in relation to their perceived barriers for and during college. These outcomes were specifically targeted during the 8 program sessions for older youth who were examined at pre- and mid-point surveys. As seen in the figure, Youth Leaders perceived barriers for college and during college decreased from pre- to mid-test after participating in tailored college and career readiness sessions. In short, Youth Leaders perceived fewer barriers for applying to and entering college following college and career training sessions.

In addition, more specific college and career readiness skills were examined amongst Year 2 & 3 Youth Leaders in the program (Figure 3). Youth Leaders demonstrated growth from pre- to post-test in time management skills and college application self-efficacy. Importantly, Year 2 & 3 Youth Leaders started the year with high perceptions of leadership skills which did not change over the course of the year, most likely a result of their previous participation in the YLA.

Figure 4 captures the influence the YLA had on Year 1 Youth Leaders in relation to their skills learned throughout the year. Youth Leaders demonstrated growth from pre- to post-test in leadership, communication, and emotional regulation skills.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

YLA Kick-Off
LiFEsports held the 2015-2016 YLA Kick-off on November 14th. At the kick-off, Youth Leaders had a chance to introduce themselves to one another and to get to know one another through some fun activities. There were 35 parents who attended an informational session, which discussed the structure and expectations of the YLA program. Our guest speaker, poet Quartez Harris, shared some of his published worked with us and spoke on the impact and importance of attending college.

College Visit: University of Cincinnati
One of our most exciting YLA sessions was a visit to the University of Cincinnati for a college tour. Fifty-one of our Youth Leaders spent the day touring the campus of the University of Cincinnati, during which they were able to see dining halls, dorm rooms, and classrooms. Following their tour, the YLA attended the Bearcats Men’s Basketball game. It was an action packed day, but our Youth Leaders definitely enjoyed the experience of touring a college campus!

Columbus Blue Jackets Game
On March 4th, Year 2 and 3 Youth Leaders visited Nationwide Arena to learn about the history of the Columbus Blue Jackets (CBJ) from Kathryn Dobbs and Maggie Walters (CBJ staff). It was definitely a fun night—the 10 Youth Leaders, along with LiFEsports staff members, sat in Blue Jackets player David Clarkson’s suite during the game. For many of our Youth Leaders, this was their first live professional hockey game—what an experience for them!

OSU Athletic Department Career Visit
The YLA participated in a Career Visit with staff and student-athletes of the Ohio State Athletic Department on Friday, July 15, 2016 at the Jack Nicklaus Museum. Twenty Youth Leaders attended the event where 4 Staff Members from the Athletic Department spoke on a variety of career fields, including compliance, social/digital media, academic counseling, and nutrition. In addition, 3 Student-Athletes (lacrosse, softball, and football) dedicated their time to speak on life in college and tips for preparing for college.

Culminating Event
This year, the Youth Leaders planned a clothing drive to donate lightly loved clothes to the Faith Mission Homeless Shelter for their culminating project. Youth Leaders collected over 3,000 articles of clothing, spent a day together sorting clothes, and helped serve a hot meal to members of the community at Faith Mission who were experiencing homelessness. We are proud of the culminating event they helped host this year and know their service to the community is appreciated!

YLA Students of the Year
Each year the YLA staff pick a Youth Leader of the Year from each cohort. These Youth Leaders embody all of the characteristics of an exceptional Youth Leader. These Youth Leaders are great role models to younger youth, hardworking students, and responsible junior counselors at the LiFEsports Summer Camp. Please join us in congratulating this year’s Youth Leaders of the Year!

YEAR 1
Andrew Pierce
YEAR 2
Kerrington Latham
YEAR 3
Devay Butler

For more information on LiFEsports and the Youth Leadership Academy, please visit our website at LiFEsports.osu.edu

YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

LiFEsports, at The Ohio State University

Figure 4. YLA Year 1 Outcomes: Leadership, Communication, and Emotional Regulation

Figure 4. YLA Year 1 Outcomes: Leadership, Communication, and Emotional Regulation

Year 1 Youth Leader Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Em. Reg.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significant growth from pre to posttest (p<.05)