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Partner Spotlight: Hilco Global

Ulta Beauty inspires WOW

Q&A with new Board Chair, Ann Lennon

Save the date for the Bright Futures Gala to be held May 14, 2020 at Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

www.youth-guidance.org
Hilco Global believes in giving back to the community so it made more than good sense to Gary Epstein, Executive Vice President and CMO at Hilco Global, to partner with Youth Guidance to create an internship program designed for high school students.

“We are thrilled to partner with Youth Guidance and we find that our executives love to participate in the internship program as mentors. They consistently report that they find their participation to be one of the most meaningful things they do all year long. Our program, which we call Hilco, helps serve as a worldwide initiative to support causes and nonprofit organizations that help enhance the lives and maximize the potential of the world’s most important assets: human assets,” said Epstein.

“It’s rare for corporations to hire high school students to be interns. Hilco’s dedication to customizing their internship program shows in the way they’ve worked to understand the interest and skill set of each student and best match them to the work. The exceptional amount of support that Hilco Management team provides each student gives them a real opportunity to learn and shine. In turn, they are always surprised by what our young people can accomplish as they are more than capable,” said Youth Guidance’s Manager of Workforce Development, Jacob Grobe.

Internships for high school students provide youth with a much-needed experiential education. Youth Guidance’s partnership with Hilco Global began in 2017 and since that time they have mentored two of our WOW students and six BAM students. These internships provide students with exposure to the professional world, which allows them to discover their true talent, build social capital, and create higher aspirations for their future. It also sets them apart from their peers on a job or college application and opens doors. A former Hilco Global intern and graduate of Workforce Development—now studying at Loyola University—shared this note:

“I chose to apply for this internship because Hilco had recently acquired a decommissioned coal plant in my neighborhood in Chicago. They had plans to demolish and re-purpose the plant into something economically beneficial for my community. I was honored to be able to have some input into the future of my community. I even gave a presentation to the executives directing the project and helped with research that was vital to the future of the project. The Hilco team and the CEO of Hilco Redevelopment Partners empowered me, led by example. They treated me with the same respect that they treat all their executives and it was very meaningful. My mentor was the CEO at the company and I was impressed that this accomplished guy wasn’t flashy, wasn’t proud. He was full of energy and ideas. I will never forget that my first business suit was a gift from him personally and it inspires me to want to achieve greatness and impact someone’s life in the future just as he impacted my life.”

In addition to opening up the business world for our youth, Hilco Global also sponsors our annual gala and their staff volunteers during our @Work events. The @Work training sessions are an opportunity for students to practice critical job readiness skills.

Hilco helps provides millions of dollars of support to nonprofit groups doing outstanding work like Youth Guidance. In addition to financial support, their employees donate time to relief efforts in disaster zones, churches, and schools across the country. For their tireless support and commitment to our community, we thank them and look forward to guiding our youth together.
A very special thank you to past Board Chair, John Raitt

John is longtime supporter of Youth Guidance and we thank him for his extraordinary leadership and service. For the past two years, he has served as Chair and has truly been an inspiration to the entire board, spurring record-breaking philanthropy among his board colleagues. We also want to thank him for always going above and beyond to empower 13,000 youth in our care. He has handled the demand of the job with grace and vigor all the while helping us grow. “With the major expansion of the scale and geographic coverage of Youth Guidance programs over the last few years, it has been a very exciting time to be a board member,” said John. “And it has been an honor to serve as Board Chair and lead this great group of directors.” John’s tenacity ensures that our programs will continue to impact youth in Chicago, Boston and now King County Washington, with plans to help more communities across the country. “We are so grateful that John will continue to serve as a board member,” said our CEO.

Exceptional beauty leader takes time to inspire youth and all we can say is WOW!

“Be bold and ask for the job,” advised Tara Simon —Ulta Beauty’s SVP of Merchandising and Youth Guidance board member —to a room full of youth from After School Matters and Youth Guidance’s WOW program.

The students were treated to a special day of learning with Ulta Beauty executives at their downtown office. The intimate setting allowed students to easily connect and engage with a diverse group of Ulta Beauty leaders from operations, merchandising, I.T. and more. Ulta Beauty staff shared that each of them had to find their own unique path to management by persisting, keeping an open mind and continuous learning. “Persistence and passion got me where I am today,” said one Ulta executive who took a very nontraditional route to leadership. Another shared that part of her storied success is due to the mentors she had in her life. She explained to youth how important mentors are and to find ones “who will stick with you and never give up on you; and who are solutions-oriented.” A WOW student and recent high school graduate found the event inspiring and explained having self-doubt. “I’ve had a very hard relationship with myself, always focusing on the negative.” She said WOW taught her to believe in herself and she now hopes to soon be a cosmetologist. After hearing all the advice given this day, she knows she will one day own her own salon. Truly an inspiring day for all.

A Q&A with Youth Guidance new Board Chair

Ann Lennon

Why are you excited about the future of Youth Guidance?

It is such an exciting time to be here as we are scaling to two more cities with the BAM program and testing our licensee model. Also, we are wrapping up the second year of the WOW study and learning more about how the program helps young women exposed to trauma. This will help us understand how to scale the program to reach more youth. We are also building our support for post-secondary opportunities.

Why is our work important right now?

The growing disparity between youth who have opportunities and those who do not is very concerning. The strength and vitality of our city and our nation depends on the contribution of everyone, and we need to close this gap to ensure a vibrant future. The programs offered by Youth Guidance address this critical need.

What drew you to volunteer your time with Youth Guidance?

I initially got involved because I was looking for a way to give back. When Scott Myers invited me to a BAM breakfast, I was moved by the impact of BAM. But things got more interesting when I met with Michelle (CEO) to discuss volunteering and she mentioned the agency was developing a program similar to BAM for girls. Over the course of the summer of 2012, I volunteered to help staff develop what became the WOW program. Shortly after that, I joined the Youth Guidance Board of Directors and became the Chair of the WOW Advisory Council in 2014.

What are you most looking forward to as the new board chair?

I am excited to learn more about how the BAM Advisory Council supports this program. I am also looking forward to helping establish the next version of the five-year business plan for the agency. Above all, I am looking forward to collaborating with committed professionals within Youth Guidance who are the forefront of affecting change in the lives of our youth.
A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The new school year is in full swing and we are ecstatic because the possibilities for the over 13,000 youth we serve are limitless! We are inspired by the progress we see our young people make including significant gains in social and emotional learning and on-time graduation rates. We are making an important impact in the schools as noted by CPS in their recent report highlighting our BAM and WOW programs as helping the district achieve its lowest ever drop-out rate “driven by improvements for African American and Latino males”. Our BAM program continues to expand in Chicago, the south suburbs, Boston, King County in Washington state, and Los Angeles County. WOW is also growing to new schools in the Chicago area. We have much to celebrate but much more work to do!

Over the summer, our youth kept busy in our dynamic summer camp programs, experiential career exploration excursions with partners like Sprint, Ulta Beauty, Uber, and a behind the scenes visit with the Chicago White Sox. Many Youth Guidance students also gained vital work experience as interns with companies like Peoples Gas, Hilco Global, the Housing Authority of Cook County, and Worsek & Vihon LLC —transformational educational experiences that we know work to empower youth to find their path to success. Thanks to our amazing partners, this school year we plan to continue to expand the curriculum and include additional career exploration and internship opportunities for students we serve via our Workforce Development programs.

Finding success, overcoming challenges and becoming who you truly are meant to be is a process. I’m so grateful to our staff who pour themselves into helping our young people navigate this journey. Thank you for your support of our mission and our unique way of unleashing the potential of our youth. Please continue to be a catalyst of change in a young person’s life by using the provided envelope to donate or you can give through our website: www.youth-guidance.org/donate.

With hope for all our youth and their families,

Michelle Adler Morrison, Chief Executive Officer