



Youth Empowerment Zone  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Youth Empowerment Zone Prioritizes Equal Opportunity For All Children**

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Youth Empowerment Zone’s Inspiring Academy program is reaching at-risk youth by providing reliable mentors at the after-school program.

The program reaches out to children from low-income families by targeting schools with the highest rates of reduced lunches. Children who attend the after school program receive help on their homework and are provided a quiet place to complete it. The children also receive educational lessons, craft time and outdoor play time. Inspiring Academy hopes to strengthen at-risk children academically, emotionally and socially so that they can break the chain of homelessness and poverty.

In addition to running Inspiring Academy, Youth Empowerment Zone helps youth achieve their personal career goals. Any person age 14 through 35 is considered youth. Individuals that fall into this age range are eligible for Youth Empowerment Zone’s employment program, which places people on track to achieve their personal goals. Youth Empowerment Zone aims to proactively reach youth and relationally connect them with ideas of empowerment. Whether this is education, entrepreneurship, or employment, Youth Empowerment Zone makes sure that each individual is provided with resources necessary for success.

Katherine Wilson, Youth Empowerment Zone Program Director, said, “A lot of the

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people we see aren't ready to pursue their goals because they've been so wounded by society. We resource them at the zone."

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### **About Youth Empowerment Zone**

Founded in 2004, Youth Empowerment Zone (<http://www.yezweb.org>) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families and children disrupt the cycle of poverty in Boone County.