



## [Year Up Arizona Graduation Closed Captioning Script](#)

### [Welcome!](#)

Thank you for joining us in celebrating the graduating Class of Summer 2022 from Year Up Arizona! For details on how to attend the event, please see the viewing instructions below.

This document serves as a transcript and translation of our graduation ceremony. As you watch the premiere of our ceremonial video, please refer to this document to follow along.

A few notes about this document:

- Timestamps included throughout the document are estimates. For accuracy, viewers can refer to speaker names included in both this document, and on screen, throughout the ceremony.
- Similarly, a portion the ceremony program is dedicated to announcing award winners. To keep the element of surprise, names of graduate award recipients have been removed from this document. Award winners will be announced on screen.

Thank you again for joining us! We hope you enjoy the program.

### [How to Attend:](#)

The Year Up Arizona Graduation Ceremony will be a virtual event streamed through Facebook Premiere on the Arizona Facebook page below.

### [Year Up Arizona Facebook](#)

The event will start promptly at 5:30 PM PT. We encourage you to open the Arizona Facebook page 5-10 minutes early. The video will appear on our main Facebook page and you will not need a direct access link.

If you follow the Arizona Facebook page, you will receive a notification that we are premiering the event soon.

You are not required to have a Facebook account to watch the premiere, though you do need to be signed into an account to set a reminder and post comments or reactions.



## 6:00 PM | GRADUATE WELCOME – Zulma Ontiveros

Welcome graduates, family, and friends. My name is Zulma, and I'm a part of Year Up's graduating class of Summer 2022 and it's my pleasure kick-off tonight's virtual graduation. Since its founding in 2000, Year Up has opened over 30 campuses across the country and has served more than 30,000 young adults—including those 77 graduates who we are celebrating tonight.

My fellow graduates and I have spent months learning essential skills and completing technical coursework in specialty tracks like Cybersecurity, Helpdesk, Project Management Support, and many more. Following that we spent months in an internship with leading employers and partners like JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Paypal and many more.

Today you will hear from graduates and staff that are a part of our Year Up Arizona learning communities: LC Fearless, LC 5<sup>th</sup> Force & LC Eternal. A learning community is a group of students and staff, which is a key support structure that contributes to our successful model here at Year Up.

If you would like to hear more about Year Up, how it works, how to refer a friend or a family member to the program, I encourage you to read more on the graduation website or check out [yearup.org](http://yearup.org).

First, I'd like to kick off today's celebration by sharing my journey and how it led me too tonight.

1 year, well 326 days, I did the calculations. I included weekends because that's when I believe all of us worked the most. Kids were home all day, canvas assignments due 11:59pm on Sunday, and for those of us a job to keep us on our feet.

We signed up for a one-year journey not knowing what to expect. I mean yeah the year up's website lets us know that's its 6 months of college education and the next 6 months in a nationally known corporation and internship; but it all sounds too good to be true. Cause: a summation of a quick application. Effect: leaving with a corporation offer or even just a great recommendation, a certification of completion and of course amazing and supporting staff, along with a pizza party for the best class. But that's not all, here I'm leaving with connections from 100 humans, who were once strangers, 104 humans who were once strangers.

Unfortunately, I have to hit you guys with the classic and cliché "it's only the beginning and not the end" because it's painfully true. We're going on to bigger and better things; starting our careers, new insight in pursuing higher education, and seeing where the self-confidence year up has helped us build will lead us. We can think of it as a relay race, a course of life where you tag another player in after every certain amount of miles. But instead, it's tapping another version of yourself in. And to that I can say stay hydrated and keep running, there may be hurdles along the way but just like this journey we have jumped them all.

Thank you, July class of 2022, for making it one of the best online classes I've been a part of.

And now I would like to introduce Yvonna Shelton, Site Director of Year Up Arizona Central City & SNHU East Valley.

## **6:06 PM | SITE DIRECTOR WELCOME – Yvonnda Shelton**

Thank you, Zulma. I want to start by thanking everyone here who has supported our graduates in their journey—those graduating here today and those who came before them: friends and families, our volunteers, donors, corporate partners, and community partners, Gateway Community College, Southern New Hampshire University, and of course, the incredible staff of Year Up Arizona, and most importantly thank you graduates. Today we celebrate 7 successful years of closing the opportunity divide of 100 young adults in AZ. It is an absolute privilege to witness these talented, motivated young adults graduating from their Year Up journey. Ready to launch their careers and achieve their dreams. Their drive, energy and commitment to reaching their full potential has certainly inspired the Year Up team. Class of July 2022 you've achieved a major milestone, one of many more that will surely come in your life. We are very proud of you, please help me and congratulating our graduates.

It is now my great honor to introduce our keynote speaker for today, Alejandra Galvan Lima.

## **6:07 PM | GRADUATE KEYNOTE ADDRESS – Alejandra Galvan Lima**

Fellow graduates today is a defining milestone in our lives. We all have all made it to this moment. My name is Alejandra Galvan Lima and I am honored to be here today to give you this speech. Before starting Year Up I had been working in the restaurant business for five years in a few different roles. I had been working the same minimum wage job comfortable in my routine with no thoughts on my future. Most times I felt stuck seeing friends and colleagues move onto better opportunities. I felt alone seeing them settle in their new careers still I didn't give up hope that one day the same could go for me. It wasn't until the beginning of twenty twenty-one when I decided life is too short to wait for an opportunity to come to me. I had to look for one myself.

After losing my dad to the pandemic that affected millions. I picked myself up and searched for low-income career programs. For those who don't know I am a DACA Recipient. I knew for me that going to a university wasn't my first choice any career I chose I had to pay out of state tuition. College just wasn't in my plans. I took a break from school for five years and went straight to work. I had given up on my dreams to get into the medical field because of my immigration status. I let the challenges cloud my vision.

I beat myself up every day for my decision to not enroll into college. I always let my fear of my immigration status get in the way of many great opportunities. I was born to two immigrant parents, Miguel, and Juana. My parents are my biggest inspirations in life. They had nothing but the dreams of a better life when they came to the United States yet gave my siblings and I everything. Which I know is more than they ever had. Because of them I learned the value of hard work. They never waited for anything to be handed to them everything they had they earned. I am thankful they taught me the meaning of perseverance it has allowed me to keep pushing forward through many painful situations.



I can confirm that the couple most before starting my Year Up journey were the lowest points of my life. I was unhappy with my life. Losing my dad it caused a wound in my heart that I didn't even think time could heal. As painful as it was to know that my rock was no longer with me on this earth. It was a wakeup call for me to get serious about my future. I was frustrated about not being able to financially provide for my mother. We had to go live with a family member during this tragedy.

During my leave of absence, I took from my job I had some time to reflect. I remember one night in particular I was desperate I began searching for low-income schools, scholarships and on my last search free schooling. Free schooling? I thought to myself. There is no such thing. To my surprise Year Up popped up as one of the results. I checked out the Year Up page and scheduled my interview. It feels unreal a year ago I had started a once in a lifetime journey that helped shaped my future forever. I don't even recognize the person I was a year ago she isn't as brave or resilient as I am today.

During my time here at Year Up I not only found a job training program for young adults with a mission to close the opportunity divide. I found a home. I have met so many inspiring individuals who have invested their time and their energy to becoming the best versions of themselves. This program is unlike any other it is not the typical college experience. I will always be thankful for Year Up and all the opportunities it has opened for me. Thank you Year Up you have taught me so many great lessons but above all the greatest I have learned is "You do not just wake up and become the butterfly growth is a process".

Now I'm now going to pass things over to Pedro Huerta, a Program Manager here at Year Up Arizona, who will introduce our awards. Thank you

## **6:12 PM | CHRIS MELLO AWARD- Pedro Huerta**

Thank you, Alejandra and good evening, everyone.

At Year Up Arizona, every graduation we come together to celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of the young adults who displayed the motivation and perseverance needed to complete this program and prepare for their next career stage. And at each graduation, we have the privilege of recognizing certain students who went above and beyond in their Year Up journey, making a significant impact on their fellow students and staff in their Learning Community.

Our first two awards honor Chris Mello and Dave Retik, two early members of the Year Up community who lost their lives in the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. One student is selected from each of our Learning Communities to receive these awards.

First, please join me in congratulating the recipients of the Chris Mello Award for Leadership, who established themselves as an exceptional leader's – leading with their actions, commitment, work ethic, and most of all integrity. Please congratulate:

*Please tune into your screen to see the awardees appear on screen.*

Congratulations.



Next, it is my honor to welcome Karen Chancellor, Employment Placement Manager at Year Up Arizona to announce our next award.

### **6:14 PM | DAVE RETIK AWARD - Karen Chancellor**

Thank you, Pedro. Hi everyone, it is my honor to announce the recipients of the Dave Retik Award for Excellence, for those who have shown the standard for excellence during throughout Year Up journey.

*Please tune into your screen to see the awardees appear on screen.*

Congratulations.

And now I'd like to pass things over to my colleague Corey Lewis, Program Manager here at Year Up Arizona to announce our next award.

### **6:15 PM | CORE VALUES AWARD – Corey Lewis**

Thank you, Karen. Our next award is the Core Values Award, given to one member of each Learning Community who truly embodies Year Up's core values: respect and value others, build trust and be honest, engage and embrace diversity, be accountable, strive to learn, and work hard and have fun. Through their everyday actions, these graduates embody all of this—and more.

Congratulations to the Summer 2022 recipients of the Year Up Core Values Award:

*Please tune into your screen to see the awardees appear on screen.*

Congratulations.

Next, please welcome Emily James, Student Services Manager at Year Up Arizona who will introduce our next award.

### **6:15 PM | PERSEVERENCE AWARD – Emily James**

Hello, I am so proud to announce the recipients of the Year Up Perseverance Award, given to a student in each Learning Community who—with tenacity, grit, and heart—has seized opportunity in the face of challenges and adversity. Their persistence is a positive example to the rest of the Learning Community, showing that with hard work and determination we can get through even the toughest of times.

Please join me in honoring...

*Please tune into your screen to see the awardees appear on screen.*

And now I'd like to pass things over to Nathan Russell for our next award.

### **6:16 PM | CORNERSTONE AWARD – Nathan Russell**



Thank you, Emily. I am excited to announce our next award for the night. The Cornerstone Award is presented at each graduation to an individual or organization that embodies Year Up's mission to close the Opportunity Divide. Cornerstone Award winners go above and beyond to change minds about what is truly possible in this country by supporting our students, staff, organization, students like me, and Year Up as a whole.

Charles Schwab, a multinational financial services company, a newer partner to Year Up Arizona and has provided an outstanding internship experience, volunteers for Year Up events and continues to look to grow and find new learning experiences and departments for Year Up young adults with the goal of helping start their careers.

Jane Raylor has committed to making the work done with the Year Up Internship program is part of the legacy she leaves behind at Schwab after her long successful career there.

As an intern myself it's been some of the best company culture I've ever experienced. From my personal experience to the experience of my colleagues that we shared, I can truly say its one of the best internship experiences.

On behalf of Year Up AZ and all of my colleagues who have interned at Charles Schwab, I would like to say thank you and present this Cornerstone Award to Jane Raylor and Charles Schwab.

Congratulations. I'll now pass things back over to Mukhtar Abdulqader.

## **6:18 PM | COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD – Mukhtar Abdulqader**

Thank you, Nathan. I am humbled to announce our final award for the night. The Community champion Award is presented at each graduation to an individual or organization that embodies Year Up's mission to close the Opportunity Divide. Community Champion Award winners go above and beyond to change minds about what is truly possible in this country by supporting our students, staff, and Year Up organization as a whole.

Tonight's winner is a Year Up community partner that has impacted over hundreds of lives in the higher education as a college campus resource. This community partner believes that all people without discrimination should have equal access to reasonable and appropriate accommodation through academic adjustments, alterations of the environment, curriculum format or equipment that allows the student to gain access or complete educational task. This department collaborates and consults with faculty, students, district, college, and community resources such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services to support the unique adjustment of students.

The Community Champion Award goes to Gateway Community Colleges, Disability and Resource Service Department. GWCC DRS's Department continues to partner with the Year Up Student Service Team to provide continuous information regarding application and eligibility requirements as well as other supporting resources for the academic success of Year Up Students and Interns. Our partnership improves Diversity Equality Inclusion and Belonging and empowers students/interns to be self-advocates of their educational journey, pursuing bachelor degrees, and develop employment readiness skills. Tonight, to accept



this award, on behalf of DRS is Dr. Dominique Doss, Gateway Community College Disability Resource and Staff Member.

Congratulations and thank you for your continue support. I'll now pass things over to Corey Lewis.

## **6:20 PM | PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES**

### **Corey Lewis:**

Thank you Mukhtar. And now we will recognize each of our graduates from Learning Community Fearless 14:

*Please tune into your screen to see the graduates appear on screen.*

And now, I'd like to introduce, Dezanae Burgess, recruitment specialist for admissions and enrollment.

### **Dezanae Burgess:**

Thank you for that, Corey. Hello everyone. And now we will recognize each of our graduates from Learning Community Eternal:

*Please tune into your screen to see the graduates appear on screen.*

Congratulations! Next it is my honor to welcome Pedro Huerta, Program Manager at Year Up Arizona, to announce our next Learning Community.

### **Pedro Huerta:**

Thank you Dez. And now we will recognize each of our graduates from Learning Community Fifth Force:

*Please tune into your screen to see the graduates appear on screen.*

Now I'd like to introduce *Maximiliano Pinion*, Year Up Arizona Alumni from Class of January 2021.

## **6:27 PM | ALUMNI OATH – Maximiliano Pinion**

Thank you, Pedro and congratulations to all the award winners.

Hello, Year Up graduates, family, and friends! I'm Maximiliano Pinon, an associate UX researcher at American Express and a proud alum from the winter class 2021. First, I want to congratulate all the graduates on achieving this incredible milestone! One of the great things about today is that we complete this journey as students and start the next one as alumni.

And now... it's the moment you've all been waiting for... or at least the moment the staff have been waiting for! The real star of the show, the box! Graduates, please open the



boxes that were given to you before the ceremony. Among other things, you'll find inside your official Year Up graduation certificate, a testament to the past year of hard work, talent, and determination that has brought you all through this journey, to the next stage of your professional careers.

Year Up has over 24,000 alumni across the country all with the power to shape the future. Together, we can move mountains—but it requires each of us to committing to lifting while we climb. The Alumni Oath is our vow to do just that. By reciting this oath, you officially join the National Alumni Association, a network of leaders who are advancing in their careers and education, who are contributing to the success of Year Up's mission, and are taking action in the movement to closing the Opportunity Divide. Please join me and your fellow alumni in making that commitment by saying the oath now.

## **6:29 PM | ALUMNI OATH & ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WELCOME – Year Up Graduates & Janice Lindsey**

I pledge that as a member of the Year Up National Alumni Association I will continue to uphold and promote Year Up's mission and core values.

I will strive for excellence and realize my potential.

I will use my time and talents to contribute to the success of Year Up, its students, and its alumni.

I will take action in the movement to close the Opportunity Divide.

I take this oath freely, as a promise to lift while I climb, and to be a lifelong ambassador of Year Up.

Hello, I'm Janice Lindsey and I'm the National Director of Alumni Relations at Year Up.

On behalf of all of us at Year Up and the Alumni Relations Team, I'd like to welcome you to the National Alumni Association.

Everything you've done along your Year Up journey has been in preparation for the day you become alumni. And you're now entering the third and longest phase of the program.

As students and interns, you proved that you were EPIC. And now that you are graduates, it's time for you to ACT. The Alumni Relations team and all of Year Up will be here to support you as your Advance in your Career and Higher Education, Contribute to the success of Year Up and Take Action in the Opportunity Movement.

And YUPRO will be here to support you as the primary job placement agency for Year Up graduates. To learn more about resources, services and supports available to alumni, please visit [yearupalumni.org](http://yearupalumni.org).

Today, as you graduate, you join more than 23,000 alumni and we hope that you will remain engaged members of the alumni community. Most importantly, we hope that you will continue to life while you climb.



Congratulations and welcome to the national alumni association.

## **6:31 PM | CLOSING SPEECH – Kari Yunt**

Congratulations graduates—alumni! You did it. Hello all, my name is Kari Yunt, I'm the Associate Director of Programs for Year Up Arizona and on behalf of everyone here from this team, I want to thank you so much for joining today to support our graduates.

Graduates' tonight is the culmination of a lot of hard work, a lot of coaching conversations, some difficult decisions and your hard one's successes. This is the beginning of the third phase of your Year Up experience, there will be no contract, there will be no Monday morning kickoff, there will be no more warm up questions and I think deep down you'll miss them, deep down. But know this. In this 3<sup>rd</sup> phase your career journey, this community of caring adults of mentors, friends, colleagues will remain intact and will continue to cheer you on and offer a hand-up as you continue to pursue your career dreams.

And as Maximilliano Pinon mentioned, we encourage you to always lift while you climb. We ask you to think of the friends, the family members in your life who deserve an opportunity and a fair shot at a career their proud of. Take a moment to look at the Year Up page on our graduation website and click on "refer a friend" every referral you give is one more step on the road to close the opportunity divide in this country and in our city and it's a divide that exist for far too long. Your support and partnership is invaluable to carrying on this work.

With that, I will leave you all to enjoy this moment. This milestone. You've earned it. Graduates, it has been an absolute honor and privilege to join you in this yearlong journey. Each of you is a shining example of what big dreams and hard work can achieve. On behalf of the entirety of Year Up, the Year Up Alumni Association, and the thousands of young adults across this city who are seeking opportunity, thank you and congratulations.