

Year Up Tampa Bay Graduation Closed Captioning Script

Welcome!

Thank you for joining us in celebrating the graduating Class of Summer 2022 from Year Up Tampa Bay! 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 Tampa Bay Graduation Ceremony will be a virtual event streamed through Facebook Premiere on the Tampa Bay Facebook page below.

Year Up Tampa Bay Facebook

The event will start promptly at 6:00 PM ET. We encourage you to open the Tampa Bay 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 Tampa Bay 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.

GRADUATE WELCOME - Dafne Dominguez

Welcome graduates, family, and friends. My name is Dafne Dominguez. And I'm a member of Year Up's graduating class of July 2022, class six. It's my pleasure to be your host for 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 the 17 graduates, whose accomplishments we're celebrating tonight. My fellow graduates and I spent months learning essential skills and completing technical coursework in specialty tracks – like Helpdesk & Desktop Support, and business operations. We then spent the last few months in an internship with leading employers like Nielson, Bank of America, Amazon, DTCC, New York Life, and more. Today you will hear from graduates and staff that are a part of our Year Up Tampa Bay, learning community: The Sixcess. A learning community, is a group of students and staff, which is a key support structure that contributes to our successful program model here at Year Up.

If you would like to hear more about Year Up, how it works, how to refer your family or friends to the program, and the amazing success of Year Up alumni, I encourage you to read more on the graduation website or check out yearup.org. First, I'd like to kick off this celebration by sharing my journey and how it led me to be graduating today.

I am a first generation college student. I am also a proud recipient of DACA. DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It's essentially a policy that allows people, like me, who were brought to the US as children, the protection from being deported. It allows me to work, have a driver's license and obtain a social security card. Back in 2017, when Trump announced the end of this program, I felt like I was in the limbo. An uncertain state of where my life would go after something that had given me so much hope of a better future, was taken from me. Then in 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the administration acted improperly in terminating the program, and so DACA remained in place till this day. While there are a lot of benefits to the program, I have experienced a lot of roadblocks as well. For instance, I started looking for alternatives to college because I couldn't apply for financial aid. I couldn't apply to certain scholarships either due to my status.

Thankfully, my school had a program where I could graduate high school while earning an associate's degree. Things started looking up from here, I started working and decided that I would pay my way through college if I had to. Because of this choice, I ended up at USF in St Petersburg pursuing a Political Science degree. I wanted to be the change my people needed to see.

However, it wasn't as easy as I thought. I soon realized that I would have to save a lot more money and work a lot more to complete my goal. So, I decided to take



break and work. That summer of 2021 I found Year Up. For me, it was a light at the end of the tunnel. Thanks to Year Up, I started my career in technology and was the first person to get converted in my LC and I now work at the J.P. Morgan Chase as a UAT Business Analyst. I would like to take this time to say gracias mama y papa for coming to this country with nothing and giving me the opportunity to have everything. I hope my story sheds a little light at the end of everyone's tunnel and to my fellow DREAMERS, si sé puede!

And now, I would like to introduce the Program Manager for Year Up Tampa Bay, Ferrisa Connell

VIRTUAL PROCESSION - Ferrisa Connell

Thank you Dafne, Greeting to all. My name is Ferrisa Connell, and It brings me great joy to call each graduate by name. I remember when you all first started the program. To see you all conquer the high's and low's that life brought you on your journey to this point here makes my heart smile. Celebrate this very moment for you! You all ready?

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

Thank you, and congratulations to all our Graduates. I am excited to introduce our keynote speaker who just so happens to be one of tonight's graduates. This young adult was voted by their peers to represent their learning community. It is my great pleasure to welcome next... Devon Ware.

GRADUATE SPEECH - DeVon D. Ware

Hello Year Up friends, family, and staff. My name is DeVon Ware and I am an Information Technology student interning at DTCC, the Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation. Congratulations to everyone who made it to this moment and thank you to all of those who helped us come this far.

Today, our class, Sixcess, begins another journey. As our days of Internship come to an end, we'll need to find the next step in our stories and write it ourselves. And every journey has its ups and downs, twists and turns, and stones in the road, and sometimes we trip over those stones. Those stones could be anything between struggling to find your glasses in the morning or struggling to find the money to pay for gas. They could be the people trying to drag you down or belittle your accomplishments, or they could be your own self-esteem. They could be forgotten homework assignments, late timesheets, or... being an hour late to a meeting because your alarm clock did not wake you up before Monday morning kickoff. These things could happen to anyone. But even when these moments *sound* terrible, they mean absolutely nothing, because today we overcame those moments and graduated. We persevered.

My personal experiences while in the program have been chaotic. Just to mention a few: I had a rough start because the situation around me in the first days of the program was not ideal. Months later, I started feeling unwell internally. Shortly after, I was hospitalized for an entire week. And, most recently, I caught COVID. I'd like to take a moment to praise those who have overcome similar situations. But remember that, all of those things mean nothing, because we've overcome those obstacles, and persevered.

At this moment, I'd like to say thanks to everyone. Thanks to the staff for helping us out, holding meetings, introducing us to people, providing support, giving advice. Thanks to our managers who not only made room for us in their teams, but decided to teach us, and help us grow. Thanks to the many helpful individuals, like those from AWS, who have told us about their personal experiences, and connected with us on LinkedIn. Thanks to those who exited the program at some point, the ones who will always be a part of class Sixcess. And lastly, thanks to the friends and family who supported us throughout our journey in the Year Up program. Throughout our experiences in the program so far, we've met each other, gained so many new insights, trainings, and goals. We've recognized that a majority of us are interested in different subjects like art, cooking, film, cars, music, and even anime.

And we've come this far because we've been working together. We lifted each other up. We've helped each other out with finding books, reminding each other to submit timesheets, excel boot camp questions, Saint Petersburg College courses, corporate profile presentations, Business plan project presentations, and more. All of us, together, have persevered through some tough times and made it to this day. So, on that note, I'd like to end with a quote about perseverance, from an anime that was introduced to me by our very own class Sixcess. I'd like everyone to remember this quote whenever you stumble over a stone in the road.

"You're going to be alright. You just stumbled over a stone in the road. It means nothing. Your goal lies far beyond this, doesn't it? I'm sure you'll overcome this. You'll walk again... soon."

-From the character, "Guts",

Written by the late Kentaro Miura

Thank you.

I'm now going to pass things over to Kirby Lee, an Employment Placement Manager, here at Year Up Tampa Bay, who will introduce our awards.

Thank you, everyone!!

AWARDS – Kirby Lee

Thank you for your inspiring words, DeVon.

At every Year Up Tampa Bay 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 to recognize 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 11th. 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:

Skyler Ferris

Next, it is my honor to announce the recipients of the Dave Retik Award for Excellence:

Dafne Dominguez

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:

Alina Ciraci

Congratulations.

Next, 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:

DeVon Ware

I am excited to announce our final 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 recipients go above and beyond to change minds about what is truly possible in this country by supporting **our** students, staff, and Year Up as a whole. This cohort's Cornerstone Award recipient goes to Saint Petersburg College: Student Service Department.

This team, led by Associate Provost Brooke Janik and consists of academic advisors, Takita Cuthbertson, Linda Huetson, Student Life Director, Jason Nicholson, Learning Resource Director, Heather Disler, and Financial Assistance Counselor, Roslynn Tarver have been long-time champions & supporters of Year Up. Since our first class in March 2019, this



team is collaborative and engaged and ensures our students feel supportive and apart of the SPC family. This demonstrates the value of our partnership & our collective efforts to ensure each student feels empowered to persist in both college and in their career.

Congratulations and thank you for all that you do for all of us, SPC. We appreciate you, & now I'll pass it over to Wanda, our Internship Services Manager.

CONGRATULATIONS / BOX OPENING – Wanda Hord

Thank you, Kirby and congratulations to all our award recipients. And now... it's the moment we have all been waiting for! Graduates, today as we conclude your time as a student of the program and transition you to an alumni, we must acknowledge that your hard work, talent, and determination has not only brought you all through this journey, but will be the very skills that propel you into the next stage of your professional careers. Please take a moment to open the packages you received prior to this day, which include your certificate, alumni pin, and more. We are so proud of you Class Sixcess Summer congratulations!

And with that, I'd like to introduce Afiya Coombs, Year Up Tampa Bay Graduate, Winter 2021, who will lead you in the alumni oath.

ALUMNI OATH INTRODUCTION – Afiya Coombs

Hello Year Up graduates, family and friends! My name is Afiya Coombs and I am a proud alum from the Class of Winter 2021. First, I want to congratulate all of 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.

Year Up has over 24,000 alumni across the country with the power to shape the future. Together, we can move mountains—but it requires each of us commit 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, contributing to the success of Year Up's mission, and taking action in the movement to close the Opportunity Divide. Please join me and your fellow alumni in making that commitment by saying the oath now.

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.

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.

CLOSING SPEECH – Fred Rosario

Congratulations graduates—alumni! You did it. You should be proud of yourselves and to the work and commitment and sacrifices you've made to get here. Celebrate yourself because you've earned it!!! My name is Fred Rosario, Site Director and on behalf of everyone here at Year Up Tampa Bay, we are proud of YOU.

For our guests, support systems, & partners I want to thank you so much for joining today to support & honor our graduates. We appreciate you!

Today marks an important moment for every one of our graduates. Graduates, it's the beginning of your professional journey—and it is a *journey*. There's no single path for you to follow. Use the skills you've developed and trust your instincts. I am confident that you'll be successful, no matter what, because you didn't get here by chance and this is just the beginning!

To my coachees- I have been honored to be a thought partner and coach to each of you. You have taught me to always remember my why and that we can truly learn more about ourselves and others, if we remain open and mindful to those opportunities.



As Aaliyah mentioned, never forget to lift while you climb. To graduates and supporters alike, you can help us recruit the next class of would-be graduates. Think of the friends and family members in your life who deserve an Opportunity to start their own professional journeys. Then take a moment to look at the "About Year Up" page on the graduation website and click on "Refer a Student." Every referral you provide is one more step on the road to closing the Opportunity Divide in this country.

With that, I will leave you all to enjoy this moment. This achievement. This milestone. Graduates, it has been an absolute honor and a privilege to know you and work with each of you. You have all the skills, talent & abilities you need to be successful. Build meaningful relationships, maintain them and leverage your networks and never forget what you bring to the table. 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. You've earned it! Good night!