

Metro & Business



File Photo

Antoine Joyce, vice president of the All Stars Project of Dallas, spoke at a 2020 orientation for participants in the group's Development School for Youth program.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

For 30 students, the All Stars Project readies them for local workplaces

School offers positive influences, mentorship to steer kids to careers

By **ARCELIA MARTIN**

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Keshoun Rhodes graduated from the inaugural class of All Stars Project's Development School for Youth in 2015. Eight years later, Rhodes is a volunteer with the Dallas chapter of the national program that trains students ages 16 to 21 to become professionals.

She hopes to become the kind of mentor that she had with the program.

"I knew that in my neighborhood, in my environment, I did not have the positive influences and the mentorship that I did get while I was enrolled in DSY," Rhodes, 24, said. "It seemed like the perfect fit for me to come back and volunteer so I can give back to the students that are currently in the program and be that person for them that I wish that I had

more of when I was in the program."

All Stars Project kicked off four decades ago in New York City, with the professional development program starting in 1997.

Antoine Joyce, vice president and city leader of All Stars Project Dallas, moved to North Texas in 2013 to kick off programming in Dallas, with hopes of improving young people's mobility from high school in South and West Dallas into the workforce. This year's cohort is composed of students from Kimball High School, Duncanville High School, Lassiter Early College and South Oak Cliff High School.

From South Oak Cliff or Kimball, the views of downtown Dallas are so prevalent, Joyce said. When he asked students if any had visited the towering buildings just miles north, not one raised their hand.

The 10-week program invites a select 30 students to workshops at companies like

Amegy Bank and Ernst & Young and creates partnerships to provide paid summer internships. All Stars is one of many nonprofits in Dallas with a professional development program, like that of Year Up and City Year.

At the office visits, All Stars students are coached on prepping for job interviews and are able to dissect recent news with industry professionals, like the crash of Silicon Valley Bank.

"Partnering with the business community was a way for young people to have those opportunities to see, to be exposed to the corporate world, to have a new stage to practice on and be connected to these worlds," Joyce said. "For some of our supporters, it was a way for them to see the lives of young people in new ways."

For the Dallas chapter's 10th graduation, Grant Moise, CEO of DallasNews Corporation, was the keynote speaker at Wednesday's event hosted at *The Dallas Morning News*.

After graduating from DSY at 16, Rhodes earned an internship with architecture firm Gensler, where she returned for the two following summers. Gensler offered Rhodes a chance to thoroughly experience the profession she was interested in pursuing, ahead of enrolling in college-level courses, giving her ample time to realize it wasn't the right fit.

"I was really grateful for that experience because I was able to learn what my passion is," said Rhodes, a substitute elementary school teacher and behavior interventionist at KIPP Texas.

All Stars partners provide financial assistance but are also asked to give in other meaningful ways, Joyce said, whether that's through creating internships for high school students or volunteering as a development coach. A handful of the graduating interns are headed to global accounting firm KPMG, Joyce said.

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