



Gaining a Sense of Belonging through the Teen Leadership Program

Oscar and his family moved from Mexico when he was just a child. According to Oscar, he always had high hopes, but he didn't know how to begin his path to success, especially learning how to apply to, pay for, and attend college.

But today, Oscar's dreams have become a reality, thanks in part to the life and leadership skills and opportunities he gained from Wyman's [Teen Leadership Program \(TLP\)](#).

Offered to more than 356 teens in St. Louis, TLP boosts teens' tenacity through six consecutive years of leadership experiences, college access and persistence programming. Wyman coaches build relationships with teens by creating engaging and empowering learning environments. Teens learn to identify their values, talents and interests, and then explore career paths that align with these traits.

Teens participate in college tours, more than 40 hours of community service annually, and work with coaches to apply for college or other

post-secondary options to succeed in their paths after high school.

The community service aspect of the program helps teens build strengths and hone social-emotional skills proven to bolster success later in life, like empathy, responsibility, initiative and problem-solving.

"With Wyman, I felt like I belonged," Oscar said. "My counselors looked out for me, and more importantly, they believed in me. I developed connections with my counselors that are some of the most powerful relationships I've ever had."

"My Wyman counselors also helped me learn to value my background and experiences, and reflect on the diverse perspective that I can share with others. There are others out there like me, and I want to prevent anyone from feeling left out, the way

that I did. By uniting and empowering each other, we can change society's viewpoints."

TLP has also helped Oscar develop his sense of self. "I see myself as a role model, for my sister, and others in my position. I want to hand down all of the knowledge I'm gaining at Wyman."

After Oscar graduates high school, he plans to pursue his degree in business and social work so that he can give back to others.

In 2015, 100 percent of TLP teens graduated from high school, 91 percent enrolled in college or another post-secondary option, and 80 percent were actively engaged in community service.

Outside Your Comfort Zone, continued

ABOUT THE TEEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

TLP boosts teens' college tenacity through a six-year course of leadership experiences, and college access and persistence programming that begins the summer after eighth grade. Wyman coaches help teens identify their values, talents and interests, and explore aligned career paths. Teens participate in college tours, more than 40 hours of community service annually, and work with coaches to apply for college and secure financial aid that reduces the financial burden after graduation. TLP coaches also provide on-campus college mentoring.

IMPACT

Wyman serves 3,000 teens across the St. Louis region: one-hundred percent of teens in Wyman's Teen Leadership Program graduated successfully in 2017, despite the only 89 percent of teens who graduated in the state of Missouri in 2016.

ABOUT WYMAN

Wyman has been dedicated to serving youth from disadvantaged circumstances for 120 years. Wyman empowers teens, equips adults and strengthens systems. Wyman's engaging, empowering and experiential programs and services help teens build skills, develop a sense of self and connections to their world. As a result, teens achieve educational success, develop healthy behaviors and relationships, and exhibit life and leadership skills. From thousands of teens in St. Louis – to tens of thousands nationally – Wyman programs and services make a difference in the lives of today's teens and tomorrow's leaders.

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