

## *Year Up San Francisco: An alternative for under-served urban youth*

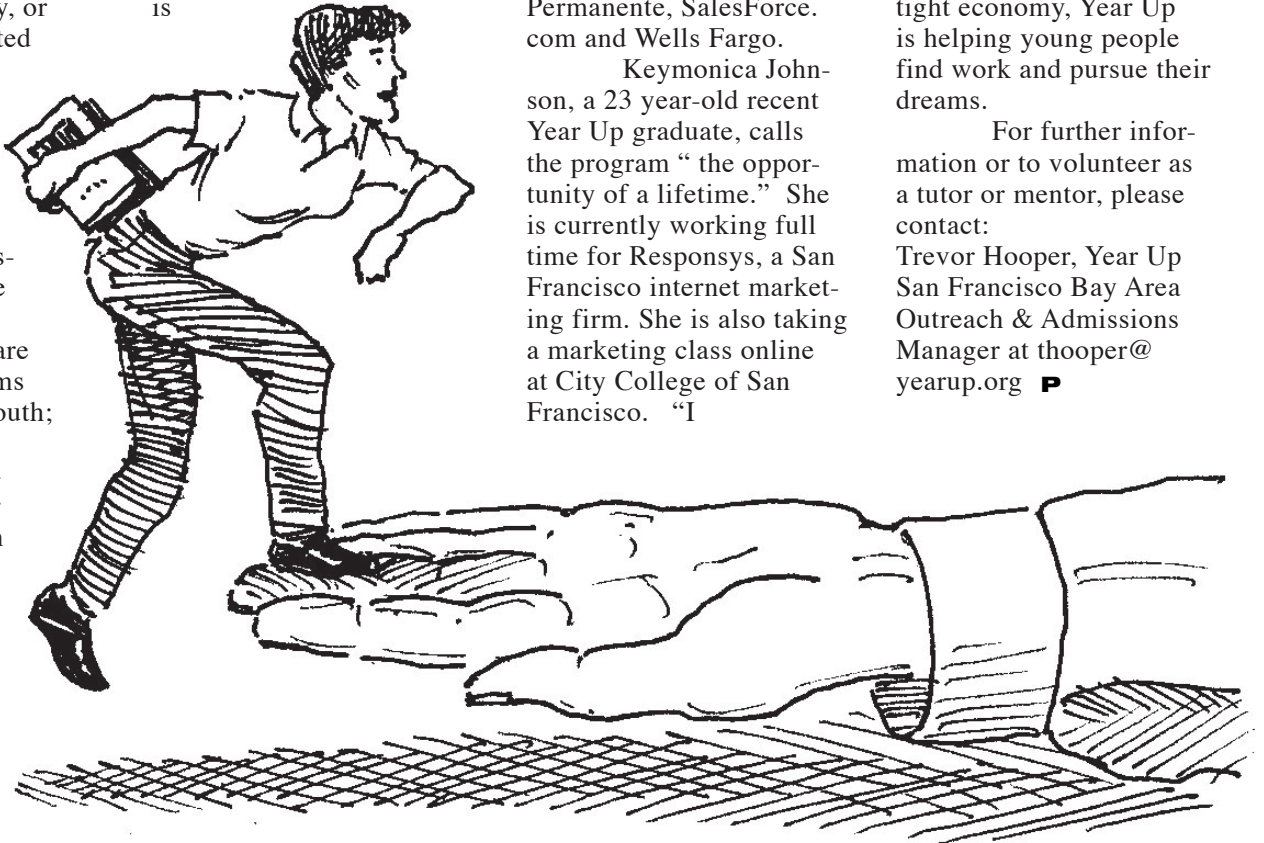
by Wendy Cohen

There are many young men and women who are not bound for college when they finish high school. They may be unable financially, unprepared academically, or simply not motivated to continue on an academic path. For some, continuing their education has never been an option, and their prospects for the future are very bleak.

But there are alternative programs that serve urban youth; Year Up San Francisco is an innovative example. Year Up was founded in 2000 by Gerald Chertavian, a successful business executive and entrepreneur. Besides the Bay Area program, there are now also Year Ups in Atlanta, Boston, New York, Providence and Washington DC. with more than 1,500 current participants.

Year Up is a 12-month, full time program for young adults from 18-24 with a high school diploma or a GED. During the first six months students attend an inter-

sive education program that focuses on marketable and technical skills, using classroom and project based-learning techniques. There is



also invaluable instruction in professional behavior and the practical concerns that students will face when employed in the 'real world.' Students earn up to eighteen units of college credit for their class work as well as a weekly stipend for participating.

The second half

of the year is an internship program. Students are placed with regional business partners, among them Alibris, California Pacific Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente, Salesforce.com and Wells Fargo.

Keymonica Johnson, a 23 year-old recent Year Up graduate, calls the program "the opportunity of a lifetime." She is currently working full time for Responsys, a San Francisco internet marketing firm. She is also taking a marketing class online at City College of San Francisco. "I

would never have been able to work for Responsys without the help of Year Up. Year Up gave me the courage and motivation to get through all of the interviews and talk to all the different people I work with in this company."

In two years, Year Up has graduated 43 students. The first class ended up with 81% employment and 69% pursuing higher education. Even in a tight economy, Year Up is helping young people find work and pursue their dreams.

For further information or to volunteer as a tutor or mentor, please contact: Trevor Hooper, Year Up San Francisco Bay Area Outreach & Admissions Manager at [thooper@yearup.org](mailto:thooper@yearup.org) **P**

*Wendy Cohen is a writer living in the East Bay and the mother of two children, 31 and 16.*

# **Lynn Ponton, MD**

## **Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist, UCSF**

### **Teen Sexuality, Health, and Risk Taking Behavior**

Dr. Ponton is an adolescent psychiatrist at UCSF and an expert on teen sexuality. A sought-after speaker, she is known for her sensitive insight into teens' lives, and her wise, compassionate and frank guidance for parents. She is the author of the popular, *The Sex Lives of Teenagers*, as well as *The Romance of Risk: Why Teenagers Do the Things They Do*.

**Oct 4, 2010**  
**place and time TBA**

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