



Self-Reliant Communities

For Immediate Release

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Isles Youth Institute Commencement June 19 at 10:00AM



Photo: Isles Youth Institute Graduation 2017

Trenton, N.J. –The 2018 Isles Youth Institute Commencement Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 19, 2018, at 10:00 AM at the Mercer County Park Marina and Boathouse in West Windsor, NJ. Commencement will include an awards ceremony and student speeches, with a reception to follow. Accomplished organizer, educator, and recently elected Trenton city councilman-at-large Jerell Blakeley will be the keynote speaker. Isles expects an audience of families, teachers, friends, and other supporters.

The commencement ceremony is the culmination of a year's worth of academic and job training for students at Isles Youth Institute (IYI), an alternative school that emphasizes leadership development and civic engagement for students who have dropped out of traditional high school. Students participate in afterschool activities and volunteer extensively in the community. Staff works with students to help them apply to college and pursue employment.

Isles, a community development and environmental nonprofit in Trenton, NJ, started New Jersey's first YouthBuild in 1995. Since then, more than 1,000 young people have successfully completed Isles Youth Institute, which is a partner of the County of Mercer's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program as well.

IYI's mission is to foster self-reliance through education by partnering with local nonprofits to guide young people ages 16-24 to obtain their state-issued high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. Students are thoroughly prepared for their future endeavors at Isles Youth Institute, which offers programs in job readiness to explore career pathways, leadership development, life skills like financial literacy, as well as a wide range of educational and social activities.

“Because of Isles Youth Institute, I gained so many resources, networks, everything I need to help me succeed. They exposed me to that, so I’m taking every chance I can get. There’s a lot of things I love about IYI. I think the thing I love most is that they really care,” says Julio Vasquez, a 2018 graduate.

“Our students deserve a safe space to explore life and develop into the servant-leaders they were created to be,” states Shenette Gray, Managing Director of Isles Youth Institute. “Our young people are destined to be great; they just need a little support as their destiny is realized.”

The IYI Commencement Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 19th at 10:00 AM at the Mercer County Park – Marina and Boathouse, 334 S Post Road, West Windsor. To attend, RSVP by Monday, June 11th at 609.341.4751 or aduggins@isles.org For more information about Isles Youth Institute, please contact Shenette Gray at 609-341-4751.

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