



hartford region

For Immediate Release

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*28 Teen Girls Celebrate Empowering Summer At YWCA Hartford Region's
YWLC Summer Institute*

Hartford, CT – YWCA Hartford Region's Young Women's Leadership Corps (YWLC) Summer Institute recently ended, but the lessons the young women learned will last a lifetime. Teens in grades 8 – 12, from the greater Hartford area spent five weeks learning more about themselves and preparing for their future. "I honestly loved this program and everybody in it," one teen girl said. "I made friends very quickly and easily. I enjoyed it and look forward to next year."

The young women participated in many activities which exposed them to new career possibilities, helped to build self-confidence and encouraged giving back to the community, including developing a recycling program at local high schools. YWLC partnered with Billings Forge Community Works to teach the girls basic cooking skills and how to eat healthy with local, fresh ingredients. The girls participated in a cooking challenge where they created unique sandwiches. Two winners had their sandwiches featured on the Kitchen at Billings Forge menu.

Aetna's corporate headquarters became a mini-campus for two full days of the Summer Institute. Core programming consisted of empowerment and self-esteem, leadership, self-defense instruction, and information technology. Aetna also provided health, wellness and financial awareness sessions.

Aetna extended an invitation to nine former YWLC Summer Institute participants for a paid-6 week high school summer internship program at Aetna. The YWLC candidates were interviewed by Aetna managers for various assignments throughout the organization. The high school interns learned critical leadership skills and how to work successfully across Aetna's enterprise. Interns were placed in departments across Aetna including: Pension and Investment Management, Information Technology, Human Resources, and Product Strategy.

The program culminated with a celebration for the teens, their families and everyone involved in Summer Institute. The girls were able to present their final social justice projects. They chose two topics: Black Girls Go Green, a bottle recycling program that buys school supplies with the proceeds and Every Skin Color Counts, a program designed to value the importance of diversity in schools.

Now in its 14th year, YWLC empowers young women to know that all things are possible, and has helped hundreds of young women build self-esteem, reach their goals and achieve their dreams.

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of the 2015 YWLC Summer Institute: the Aetna Summer Institute Planning Team and Aetna employees, Billings Forge Community Works and its employees, Todd Fairchild, Gail Frahm, Alice Turner and Dr. Rochelle Young.

Funders who support the YWLC program year round and/or the Summer Institute include: Aetna and the Aetna Foundation, Camp Burt-Tetlow Foundation, Inc., General Mills Foundation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Kids Education Fund, The Ensworth Charitable Foundation, The Fund for Greater Hartford, Travelers Foundation, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut.

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Established in 1867, YWCA Hartford Region is the third oldest affiliate of YWCA, a women's membership movement dedicated to **eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.** YWCA Hartford Region provides programs and services in the greater Hartford Region including child care, supportive housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness, financial literacy and economic empowerment. For more information, visit www.ywcahartford.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).