

# FOSTERING PURPOSE



## THE IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE



# Youth Directions



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## Program uncovers career-track views

*Effort can cut education costs by identifying students' majors before starting college*

By Vic Vela

Nathan Yujiri is an aspiring teacher, but not long ago the 23-year-old University of Colorado student described himself as desperate for career-path guidance.

Before this summer, Yujiri, a junior, had changed majors from international studies to engineering. Then, he had another change of heart and felt stuck.

"To me, it was hard to commit because once I make a decision, it narrows my possible future opportunities," he said. "They tell you that you have a lot of time to decide. But, most students should have their majors lined up by the time they're juniors."

So, Yujiri sought help from Youth Directions, a Jefferson County-based nonprofit that coaches young people through a process of self-discovery to help them find their lives' calling.

Yujiri — who is now on path to become a math teacher — was at first reluctant to join Youth Directions, thinking it might be akin to prior experiences with career-counseling services, which he said he found weren't re-

2009, said he hears stories like Yujiri's all the time.

"What schools should really be doing is helping kids find their purpose or calling," Brackman said. "Instead, they're helping them find a major or a career. Every time you change your major, that's a huge amount of money down the drain."

Youth Directions, through several hours of coaching and in-depth exploration, helps students recognize their passions and purpose in life. Students also receive mentoring and can shadow professionals in their chosen field.

Recently, students at Dakota Ridge High School took part in a Youth Directions-led passion-and-purpose-finding program.

"They really got into it," said Pam Cummings, a teacher at Dakota Ridge. "At first, it was really deep, the writing and self-analysis. But, once they got over that hill, they were just really excited."

The program costs money, but Brackman said Youth Directions works with a sliding fee scale.

"We'll never turn someone down for lack of financial abilities, if they're motivated,"

purpose. That's striking gold for us." in an upcoming five-day winter-break



Levi Brackman, executive director for Youth Directions in Golden, visits with students during a classroom exercise Dec. 5 at Dakota Ridge High School. Photo by Andy Carpenean

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- coach youth 14-22 to discover purpose and direction
- one-on-one coaching
- coaching in schools

# Purpose Economy: The Shift



*The*  
**PURPOSE  
ECONOMY**

# Why Is Purpose Important?



# Benefits of Purpose



In addition to being a powerful motivator, research has established that a purpose in life is associated with:

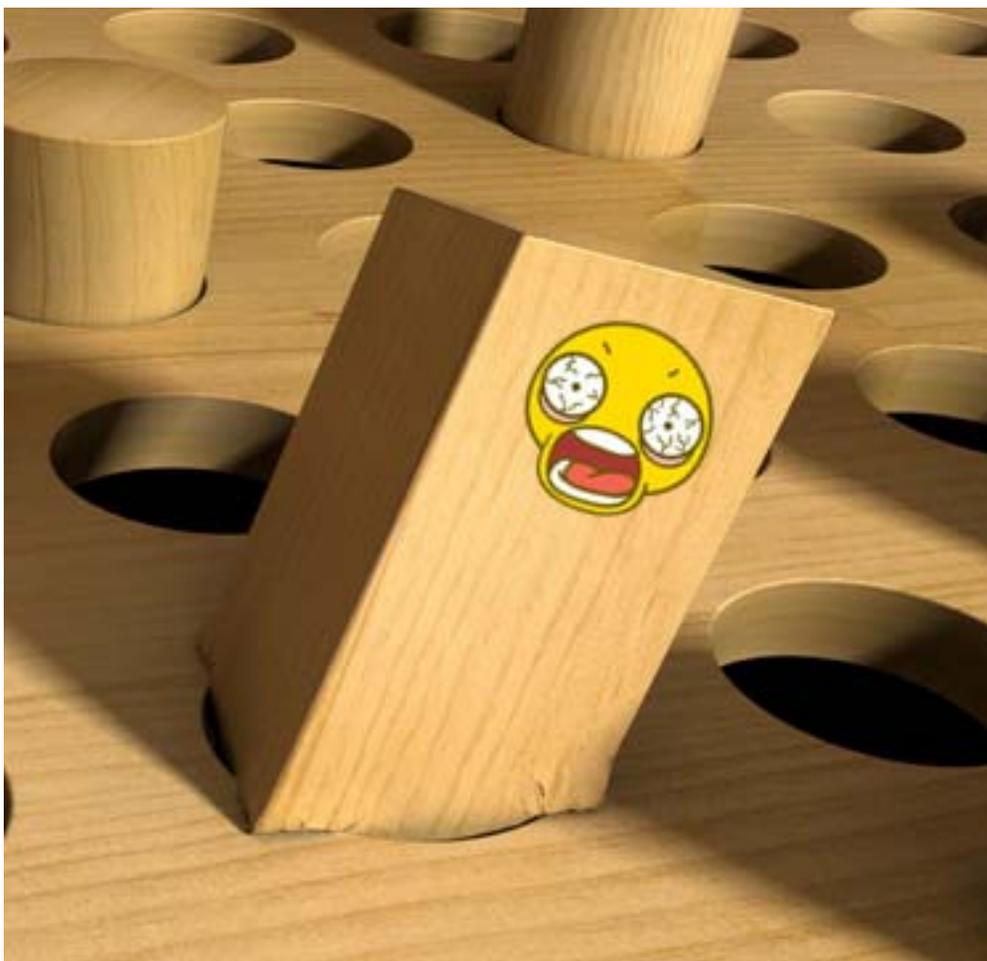
- Optimal youth development (Damon, 2008; Benson, 2006). For example, it has been identified as a developmental asset (Benson, 2006),
- Is associated with **psychological health** (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1967; Kish & Moddy, 1989; Shek, 1993)
- A key factor in **thriving** (Bundick, Yeager, King, & Damon, 2010, in press)
- Brings **happiness** (French & Joseph, 1999)
- Brings **resiliency** (Benard, 1991)
- Brings **life satisfaction** (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009)
- An important component of human **flourishing** (Seligman, 2002)

See “*Purpose in life among high ability adolescents,*” by Kendall Cotton Bronk, W. Holmes Finch and Tasneem L. Talib ([https://coa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/CHAS\\_A\\_5253391.pdf](https://coa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/CHAS_A_5253391.pdf))

# Youth Who Lack Purpose



- **Less likely to have a motivating belief system**
- **Have a sense of “drift”**
- **Less likely to take anything beyond himself into consideration**
- **Much more likely to be self-absorbed and narcissistic**
- **Much more likely to experience depression**
- **Much more likely to waste their lives by doing things that harm themselves**
- **Much more likely to suffer from addictions**
- **Much more likely to suffer a variety of psychosomatic ailments.**
- **Have deviant and destructive behavior**
- **Have a lack of productivity**
- **Have an inability to sustain stable interpersonal relationships**



# Passions or “Sparks”



Youth with “Sparks” have:

*(Sparks are defined by The Search Institute's, Dr. Peter Benson, PhD. as something that makes a teenager want to jump out of bed in the morning--that which gives their life meaning)*

- Higher Grades
- Higher School Attendance
- Likely to have a sense of purpose
- More Socially Competent
- Healthier Physically
- Less likely to experience depression
- Less likely to engage in violence

-- The Search  
Institute

# How Youth Directions' Fosters Purpose in Youth



The coaching process can be broadly separated into three parts:

1. Coachee realizes they have a unique positive purpose
2. Coachee is coached through a process of self-exploration to find the dimensions of their shape
3. Coachee discovers how their unique shape and positive purpose fits into the universe



Welcome to  
**Purpose  
Navigator**

**Academic and Career Plan (ACP) & Individual Academic and Career Plan (ICAP)**

Many states require that all public schools students create an Academic and Career Plan (ACP) sometimes known as an Individual Academic and Career Plan (ICAP). Research shows the immense value of having having a properly thought out plan that one is passionate about achieving. However, when the ACP/ICAP does not lead to a autonomously created purposeful goal the plan becomes a chore and will lack excitement and meaning.



< Purpose in life is linked to longevity >

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FREE 14 DAY TRIAL  
OF THIS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN PURPOSE DISCOVERY TOOL**



# 6 Tips for Helping Your Students Find Purpose



1. Introduce the idea of purpose when discussing vocations.
2. Engage in regular conversations with students about their interests, passions, and what makes them get up out of bed each morning.
3. Give students examples from the lives of purposeful people (Gandhi, Steve Jobs, Oprah, etc)
4. Discuss exactly how an interest or passion can be turned into a purpose or vocation.
5. Advise students to meet with or interview professionals in the job fields that interest them.
6. Link present educational activities with students' future goals.



For more information contact  
**Executive Director**  
**Levi Brackman:**

(303) 462 – 5777

or

[l.brackman@youthdirections.org](mailto:l.brackman@youthdirections.org)

Youth Directions  
1400 Simms Street, Suite 230  
Golden, CO 80401