

I am Albert Sykes, a 22 year-old member of the Young People's Project in Jackson, MS. YPP is a math literacy organization that advocates for quality education by nurturing the demand for one. I first experienced this work in the sixth grade at Brinkley Middle School in Jackson. I have been imbedded in YPP\Algebra Project for over 10 years. I have experienced through this work many things that a majority of my peers over the world have never imagined. I've traveled to many places over the course of these years such as Boston, New York, Washington, D.C. and many other places around the country. I have met people such as Bob Moses, Danny Glover and Harry Belafonte'. Seeing all of these people and places at such a young age broadened my vision of the world. My imagination stretched beyond my neighborhood and I began to want to explore opportunities I never thought existed. YPP was an alternative to normal student life. Most YPP members didn't have after-school jobs, instead choosing to remain after hours to continue learning. We had a hub in our school called the Math Lab where all of our activities took place. The Math Lab exposed us to the ever-changing world of technology more than ever before. This was done by surrounding us with state-of-the-art computers, cameras, calculators and other equipment. All of our equipment was utilized in developing innovative ways for us to learn.

As our passion for learning intensified as our time commitment to YPP increased and the same was true vice-versa. We spent countless Saturday mornings constructing and learning different math games. Our personal relationships as well as those we had with Omo and Taba Moses, YPP's founders grew as well. The same amount of time spent learning and creating curriculums and activities was spent learning and creating relationships with each other. Intertwined in all we do is time in which to delve into our history. Through Dr. Moses and others such as C.C. Bryant and Curtis Muhammad we heard first-hand accounts of the horrific experiences and wonderful moments from the civil right era. We have been to various conferences and gatherings that have exposed us to people like Danny Glover and Harry Belafonte' and Rev. Al Sampson. All of these men are still advocating for human and civil rights issues. We are currently organizing the Finding Our Folk tour which is intended to raise the voices of and draw constant attention to Hurricane Katrina's survivors. We will provide various workshops and services that are designed to help facilitate the citizens' reclaiming of their city. We also seek to document scores of personal recollections of these citizen's stories and broadly publicize them. Our ultimate mission in this initiative is to reconnect countless individuals and communities. All of our work is centered around building demand. The demands to vote, to have access to a quality education and to embody a recognized voice are some of the goals we are working towards. Everything depends on demand and our greatest tool for demand are still our voices and our vote. Voting is very important in achieving our goals because we must seek out and elect leaders who understand the importance of our demands. We are gaining ground each day and we have surrounded ourselves with people who have the drive to help see this work to the end. Our desire is to enhance our ability to organize and mobilize and to share that ability with others.