I founded YME in 2007 as an undergraduate Marine Affairs student.
“In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.”

Marianne Williamson
Becoming a Young Marine Explorer

Kentay Campbell, 10th Grade Student
Located in the central Bahamas, Cat Island is about 60 miles long.
CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

JOIN YME

As a YME Member you will:
- Learn to swim, snorkel, and SCUBA dive
- Participate in marine science research
- Become community leaders
- Develop skills for future employment
- Improve your academic performance
- Take part in community service
- Have fun, play games, and complete art projects
My Ocean My Future
Shamar Thompson, 12th Grade Student
Located in the central Bahamas, Cat Island is about 60 miles long.
Como hill is the highest point in the Bahamas, 206 ft above sea level.

A monastery called the hermitage is at the top.
“My YME highlights include conducting experiments, collecting water quality data, and beach profile data ...

As YME members we are being inspired to become active citizens and stewards of our environment.”

Shamar Thompson
We meet after school once a week for 2 hours.

Ocean classroom sessions are held every other Saturday for 4-5 hours.
Sandy Beach Zones:
1. Intertidal Zone - seaweed
2. Pioneer zone - Sea purslane
3. Fixed Dune Zone - Sea Oats
4. Scrub Woodland zone - Sea Grape
It’s my ocean.

A health ocean means my generation will have a prosperous future.

As a citizen scientist I am understanding the status of our ecosystems and working towards building resilient communities.
Community Driven Conservation in Small Islands
Nikita Shiel-Rolle, MSc - YME Executive Director
Factors inhibiting successful conservation in The Bahamas.

**Education**

The Bahamas has a functionally illiterate society. High school students are not graduating with the skills required for economic growth and sustainable development.

**Engagement**

Local communities who are often most greatly impacted by environmental policy decisions are not actively and equally engaged in the conservation process.

**Data**

There are major data deficiencies and no systems in place to collect spatio-temporal data throughout the Bahamas, preventing evidence-based resource management.
The YME Approach to Community Driven Conservation (CDC)
We are developing active citizens and environmental leaders who are taking action by:

- monitoring biodiversity,
- restoring ecosystems,
- assessing impacts from disasters, and
- supporting natural resource management and policy.
Cat Island Community Driven Conservation Project
Objectives:
1. Inspire and develop active citizens and environmental leaders
2. Collect large data sets on ecosystem health and community perspectives to support evidence based management and policy making
3. Develop sustainable behavioral habits that support community driven conservation, creating changes that build environmentally resilient communities.
Engaging The Community

- Requested permission from local government
- Identified and developed strategic partnerships
- Enrolled 42 students, approx. ⅓ of our targeted high school population
- Enrolled 8 apprentices (local government, fisheries officers, fisherman, and youth)
Our YME Marine Citizenship Curriculum has seven units:

1. marine citizenship
2. shorelines
3. marine debris
4. reef fish
5. mangroves
6. coral reefs.
7. water quality

The YME Curriculum has been mapped on top of the Ministry of Educations learning objectives for:

- biology
- math
- geography
- language arts
Training Community Conservation Leaders

- The YME Apprenticeship Program focuses on training conservation leaders and building local capacity.
- Our apprentices reflect a cross section of the Cat Island community.
- The educational background of our apprentices range between individuals who never completed high school, to a recent graduate with an Associate Degree in Marine Science.
- Our goal is 100% employment for the 5 unemployed apprentices.
Our goal is to train and engage high school students and community members in collecting, analysing, discussing, communicating, and restoring/addressing:

1. shorelines
2. marine debris issues
3. reef fish populations
4. mangroves
5. coral reefs.
6. water quality issues
Since January 2019 We:

- Trained 50 citizen scientists in beach profile and water quality protocols
- Through a consultative process with our apprenticeship team, identified 10 beaches throughout the island that have become our long term monitoring sites for our Beach Profile Surveys.
- Conducted beach profiles and collected water quality data on 4 of the 10 beaches.
Inspiring Behavioral Change:
- This work is personal, emotional, and must come from the heart
- Being an active member in our community is critical to the success of our conservation work.
- We host community events and support initiatives led by local organisations.
Our Future Plans

Produce a Policy Brief for UNESCO on the implementation and scalability of YME’s approach to Community Driven Conservation and the use of participatory science.

Host a stakeholders workshop for UNESCO to improve awareness, capacities, and actions that will result in improved decisions, policies, and coastal and marine programming at a local level, including climate change adaptation of vulnerable communities.

Coral Fest: A celebration of Bahamian Natural and Cultural Heritage July 4-7th

Opening of Co-Laboratory Research and community Center
Thank You