

Higher Education Innovators

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Presented by: Denise Crossan, Swarthmore College

1st Place: Year-Up and GreenLight Fund. Year Up's mission is to close the opportunity divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education. Year Up's high support, high expectation model combines marketable job skills, stipends, internships and college credits. By focusing on students' professional and personal development, Year Up places young adults on a viable path to economic self-sufficiency. Launched in 2013, Year Up Philadelphia Professional Training Corps targets the area's approximately 111,000 opportunity youth (18-24-year olds out of work and school), seeking to empower their success through meaningful workforce training and college completion. The program operates in partnership

with Peirce College, where all Year Up participants are enrolled, and where Year Up collaboratively utilizes and builds upon Peirce's infrastructure, curriculum, community and goals. Upon graduating from Year Up, Philadelphia students will have completed one year of college with approximately 24 credits, contributing to the college's persistence rates and degree attainment. In just a few years, Year Up Philadelphia has become one of the most valuable resources in the city both for individuals looking to accelerate their career and education, and for companies who need to fill entry-level positions with qualified, skilled and motivated employees from their community.

Omar Woodard, GreenLight's Executive Director, comments, "Year Up Greater Philadelphia and the GreenLight Fund are humbled to receive this award. We accept it on behalf of Philadelphia's young adults who only need the opportunity to achieve their dreams."

2nd Place: Graduate! Philadelphia. Graduate!

Philadelphia's objective is to increase the number of adults completing college in the Greater Philadelphia region, by engaging business, higher education, government, organized labor, workforce and economic development, community building organizations, social service providers, and college graduates to align existing resources, remove barriers, and create new pathways for adults to complete a college degree.

The organization's Executive Director, Barbara Mattleman, states, "Graduate! Philadelphia is thrilled to be recognized for our work helping Comebackers—adults who have some college credit who want to go back to school to complete their degree. Thank you for helping us get the word out about our important services to the thousands of adults in our region who have some credit, no degree."

3rd Place: i-LEAD. To liberate human potential in challenged communities, I-LEAD strengthens leadership and creates breakthrough learning via innovative curriculum, access to higher education and charter schools. We help our students build and practice a repertoire of important leadership skills—the skills entailed in effective dialogue, negotiation, creative leadership, systems thinking, speaking as a leader, and ethical leadership. We help our students master certain bodies of supplemental information required for effective leadership, including knowledge of public systems, private systems, political leadership, group dynamics, and understanding technology. We assist our students, partners and clients in envisioning and achieving tangible community-based leadership initiatives, in the areas of community leadership, education, community health, and technology proficiency.

David Castro, President and CEO of I-Lead, acknowledges, "Being recognized through the Social Innovations Awards will help our program achieve its full potential. The award will interest new partners, community

members and funders in joining our program, helping to achieve our mission of increasing higher education attainment with all of its community benefits."