

Young Women Choosing to Succeed

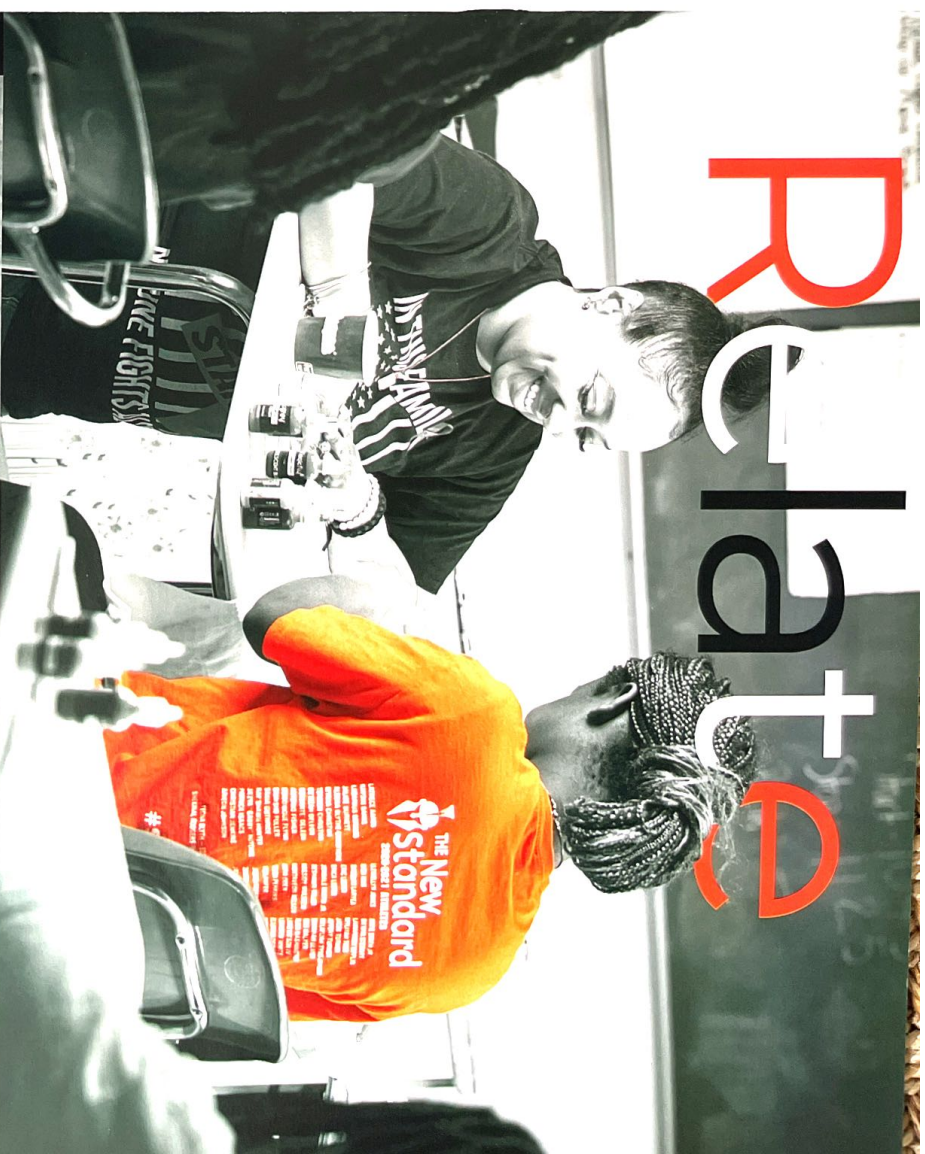
In partnership with New Standard Academy in Flint, theYWCA is currently offering a 10-week program, **Young Women Choosing to Succeed**, to 7th and 8th grade girls each making period.

This program focuses on personal strengths and leadership skill development. At the conclusion of the 2022-23 academic year, approximately 50 girls will have participated!

The weekly activities are based on two main curricula that theYWCA Greater Flint has selected for its middle school programming. One was developed by theYWCA USA and the other by the One Circle Foundation. Both incorporate concepts around identity development, resiliency and strengths, and activities that are trauma-responsive. Participants learn about their strengths, effective decision-making, self-advocacy, healthy relationships, and leadership. The program offers positive affirmation, encouraging the girls to feel confident about themselves and their abilities.

Sessions are held twice per week at New Standard Academy and are led byYWCA Program Coordinator Kanisha Clemons, whom the participants call "Ms. K." As the facilitator, she ensures the class is a safe environment where everyone is heard, supported and encouraged. Reflecting upon the experience, Kanisha commented, "It takes a minute to open up and trust. By the 5th or 6th week, the girls are comfortable with each other and will say anything." The group forms tight bonds that continue once the class has ended. "They become like sisters," she said. When the semester ends, the girls are sad and wish Young Women Choosing to Succeed classes would continue into their high school years.

Kanisha always ends every class in the same manner, saying "Have a good day. Make sure we make good choices." The girls then echo back, "You make good choices, Ms. K!"



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Kanisha Clemons
YWCA Program Coordinator



Kanisha Clemons (center, standing) with a group of girls from the 2022-23 "Young Women Choosing to Succeed" program.