

Latin American Youth Center is a regional, multi-cultural community-based organization. LAYC works to empower underserved youth in the District through various programs; DC Reads works in particular with its in-school/after school programming. Latin American Youth Center is unique among DC Reads' Sites in that it has more than one location. Tutoring for younger students in Columbia Heights happens at Powell Elementary, while tutoring for older students in Tenleytown takes place at Deal Middle School.

Latin American Youth Center was founded in 1974 as a not-for-profit youth and family development center. It has since grown from a small entirely volunteer-focused organization to a full year-round programming center. LAYC shifted in the mid-nineties to include housing/transitional living programs in their array of services for Latino Youth in DC. LAYC has been the driving force behind many incredible programs throughout the years including: housing developments for homeless young men and women, the YouthBuild program which enables people ages 16 to 24 to work, gain skills in constructing affordable house, and complete their GEDs/high school diplomas, the Next Step Public Charter School designed specifically to assist teenage parents in receiving their high school diploma, the Youth Opportunities program which LAYC explains on its website as "a 'one-stop' for out-of-school youth in need of educational, recreational, social and employment opportunities", the Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School, and many other youth and community opportunity based initiatives.

LAYC works with the beliefs that empowered youth will be able to overcome nearly any adversity when supplied with the right resources. The center works to provide those resources, in particular with the educational programs, through a sense of structure, personal support, and academic support.

Students at Powell and Deal both receive in classroom, small-group support from their tutors in order to complete their homework and have an enjoyable after school experience. The staffs are dedicated to creating the best educational environment they can for the students and the students' success rates demonstrate this. Latin American Youth Center places an emphasis on leadership, determination, cultural awareness and community engagement which combined create a pathway of success for their students.

"It sounds cliché but my favorite part of LAYC is the kids; I love working with my first graders. They're little nuggets of joy!" - Marina Kelly, LAYC Powell Tutor and Team Leader