

Leadership Awards

The annual **AYA Leadership Awards for Volunteer Innovation and Service** are made for outstanding individual service. Unlike the AYA Board of Governors Excellence Awards, which are presented by the Board to alumni groups, these awards are made to individuals who have been nominated and then voted on by the AYA staff, the professionals who have seen the passion of their nominees firsthand. This provides the AYA's front-line workers with a way of recognizing each year the extraordinary accomplishments of at least a few of the many "Ambassadors for Yale" – the outstanding volunteers who have demonstrated a willingness to give back, a penchant for innovation, and a high level of selfless service on Yale's behalf.

The following individuals are being presented with these awards for the 2013–2014 year.

Puneet Batra '02 MS

Puneet Batra's dedication to the Yale Alumni Service Corps has been extraordinary. As chair of YASC – an alumni-run initiative that organizes service-based trips promoting sustainable development in underserved communities around the world – he has shown an uncanny ability to manage complex programs, such as YASC's summer service trips to Ghana in 2013 and India in 2014. As producer of these ventures he oversaw planning, marketing, logistics, budget, recruiting, communications and project management with skill and enthusiasm. He focused not only on practical ways of helping the communities visited but also on instilling a passion in his fellow alumni for the transformative joy in serving others.



Ruth Botsio '09

Ruth Botsio has been a true “Ambassador for Yale” in Ghana. She was a lead planner for the summer 2013 “Success to Significance” conference in Accra, cosponsored by the Yale Club of Ghana, the Afro-American Cultural Center at Yale and the AYA, and was key organizer for the Yale Concert Band’s visit to Ghana this past May to perform in support of the Ghana-Yale Partnership for Global Health. She helped coordinate last year’s Yale Alumni Service Corps trip to Ghana, and has overseen student mentoring projects in both Accra and London. Upon hearing of a young man living in a remote fishing village who had received top scores on his high school exams, she personally brought college admissions officers to meet him, acting on behalf of the Yale Club of Ghana and its mission to be of service to the community.



Amber Edwards '82

Amber Edwards is the kind of powerhouse alumna who could only have emerged in “the new AYA.” Her passion is American musical theater, and in 2012 she conceived and co-organized the “Cole Porter at 100” centenary celebration on campus whose success subsequently inspired her to found the Yale Musical Theater of the Air. In January 2014 the YMTA brought together over 100 alumni from Yale College, the School of Drama and the School of Music, as well as current undergraduates, faculty and staff, to mount two concert performances of “My Fair Lady” at the Shubert Theater for audiences of over 1,800 people. This unique enterprise demonstrates how the



aspiration of “a more unified Yale” can be achieved in innovative ways by engaging a broad and talented group from the Yale family.

Serena Flaherty '99, '06 MSN

Serena Flaherty remembers that back in 2006, when she was about to earn her MSN degree, she felt the lack of a mentor she could turn to for encouragement and advice. Years later, after joining the board of the Yale School of Nursing Alumni Association, she oversaw the creation of YSNAA's first mentoring initiative, which matched alumni with students in similar specialties. Through this now-permanent program, job connections have been made, friendships have blossomed, students have found confidence starting careers as nurse practitioners, and hundreds of YSN alumni across the globe have been re-engaged. As she steps into her new role as board president this fall, Serena has plans to build the program further and connect even more alumni back to Yale.



William A. Kolber '86

Even before joining the board of the Yale Alumni Association of New York a few years ago, Billy Kolber had a long record of engagement as a volunteer through YaleGALA and his singing groups. But he will now be remembered as the creator of Foodtober, a month-long festival of food-related events in October 2013 that brought YAANY into collaboration with numerous shared-interest groups, alumni organizations and community partners. Touching on food culture, creation, politics,



business, media, history and science, Foodtober encompassed 16 events that attracted over 500 participants and raised \$7,000 for the Yale Sustainable Food Project and local nonprofits. The festival is becoming an annual item on YAANY's calendar, and Billy is using it to cultivate other alumni leaders, even outside New York.

Benjamin Slotznick '70, '73 Dra

The Yale Global Alumni Leadership Exchange (YaleGALE), an AYA initiative that brings alumni leaders from Yale and other universities together to discuss best practices in alumni relations, has found an



enthusiastic proponent in Ben Slotznick. As the producer for YaleGALE's European tour this past spring, he organized major conferences in four cities and coordinated collaboration with Yale Clubs, consulates, universities and other groups in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Starting last year he has also been the producer of YaleGALE@Yale, an annual symposium held in conjunction with the AYA Assembly attended by 30 participants from 14 institutions in 10 countries. In addition, he is president of the Yale Alumni Association of Central Pennsylvania, and has served as reunion chair for the Class of 1970.

Excellence Awards

The annual **AYA Board of Governors Excellence Awards** recognize the superior accomplishments of Yale's classes, regional clubs and associations, shared-identity and interest groups, and graduate and professional school alumni associations. These awards honor programs, events and best practices in alumni relations that have achieved excellence in their results. The successes reflected in these prizes raise standards and contribute to the growing impact of alumni activities throughout the entire Yale family worldwide.

The following groups are being presented with these awards for the 2013–2014 year.

★ **Highest Reunion Attendance Award**

For highest attendance, measured as total number of alumni, family and friends attending a quinquennial reunion, and measured against previous reunions of the same anniversary

Yale College Class of 1954: 60th Reunion

Yale College Class of 1989: 25th Reunion

Yale College Class of 1994: 20th Reunion

Yale College Class of 2009: 5th Reunion

★ **Highest Percentage of Returning Alumni Reunion Award**

For highest percentage of returning alumni measured against total living alumni of the class and against previous reunions of the same anniversary

Yale College Class of 1989: 25th Reunion

Yale College Class of 1994: 20th Reunion

Yale College Class of 2009: 5th Reunion

★ Outstanding BOLD Class Award

For the “Bulldogs of the Last Decade” class that exhibits excellence in young alumni engagement, either through an array of programming (educational, cultural, athletic, social, and/or community service), a specific initiative, or creative outreach connecting with classmates across the globe

Yale College Class of 2013

After planning a dazzling array of events before their graduation, the Class of 2013 sponsored an unusual number of activities attracting large crowds in their first year as Yale alumni. Events included an entire weekend of happenings in New Haven during the 2013 Yale-Harvard Game, social events coinciding with the Yale-Harvard hockey match in Madison Square Garden, and a summer blowout party in New York with over 100 people attending. The Class of 2013 has also shown leadership in collaborating with other BOLD classes for events such as their Spring Bash.



★ **Outstanding Major-City Club Award**

For the alumni association among the seven major cities that exhibits overall excellence in programming, including a successful mix of educational, cultural, athletic, social and community-service programming

Yale Club of San Francisco

Collaborating with every local SIG group, the Yale Club of San Francisco produced some 130 events last year – everything from operas, symphonies, theater shows and speaker symposia to meet-ups, conferences, nature walks and community-service projects. Adopting a “vertical” structure along seven categories of alumni interest, the Club implemented an annual planning retreat, board meetings on alternating months, twice-monthly newsletters, an active website and periodic membership surveys. Well-attended highlights of the year included the Yale Entrepreneurs and Investors Conference, the Yale Day of Service, and “Master’s Tea by the Bay” salons featuring visiting professors and alumni.

★ **Outstanding Cities Award**

For the alumni association outside the major and mid-sized markets that exhibits overall excellence in programming, including a successful mix of educational, cultural, athletic, social and community-service programming

Yale Club of Nevada

After a decade of dormancy, the Yale Club of Nevada has re-established itself over the past two years by creating a new board, adopting formal bylaws, opening a bank account, starting a website and Facebook page, and applying for 501(c)3 status. Despite its small pool of alumni – 200 in Las Vegas

and 100 in Reno — it now has a lively calendar of activities, including Yale Day of Service projects, Feb Club, ASC student recruitment, events featuring visiting Yale professors and singing groups, participation in an All-Ivy network, and expansion of the inspirational Yale Book Award to 11 participating schools, which has increased awareness and fostered a positive image of Yale.

★ **Outstanding International Club Award**

For the international alumni association that exhibits overall excellence in programming, including a successful mix of educational, cultural, athletic, social and community-service programming

Yale Club of Beijing

Along the themes of service, knowledge and fellowship, the Yale Club of Beijing organizes an average of two events per month covering a wide range of topics and disciplines: visits to migrant villages and schools, 29 Kickstarter scholarships for rural students to attend Chinese universities, a Music Salon series featuring Yale-trained musicians, Yale Day of Service projects, a test drive and talk on electric vehicles with Tesla, a screening and discussion with the director of “The Alibaba Story,” symposia on information security, a viewing party for The Game, and other lectures, meals, concerts and Master’s Teas, not to mention occasional visits by Yale’s president.



★ **Outstanding Club Day of Service Award**

For the Yale Club that demonstrates the most successful Yale Day of Service engagement

Yale Club of San Francisco

The Yale Club of San Francisco boosted the number of sites this past year from 8 to 14 and drew an all-time high of 240 volunteers by forging new partnerships with other nonprofit and alumni groups. Projects included garden restoration at the Alameda Point Collaborative with YANA NorCal, Operation Hope in Oakland with the Game Theory Academy, clean-up at the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center with the Yale Black Alumni Association, serving meals at Curry Senior Center with Project OpenHand, an “Imagine College” forum for students with the Yale Club of Monterey, preservation work at the Angel Island Immigration Station with AAAYA NorCal, and work with the Marin Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and a Chinatown Education and Careers Pathway Forum.



★ Outstanding G&P School Award

For the graduate/professional school alumni association or chapter that exhibits overall excellence in programming, including a successful mix of educational, cultural, athletic, social and community-service programming

Graduate School Alumni Association

For the past five years, the board of the Graduate School Alumni Association has helped current students on their career paths. Through its counseling initiatives, the GSAA has changed the perception of “alternative” careers, encouraging faculty and students to focus on the versatility of an advanced degree from Yale. The GSAA’s annual Graduate Student Workshop brings successful alumni back to campus to talk about careers in and outside the classroom, offering valuable networking opportunities. And its departmental resource panels seek to make vital connections between teaching faculty and current students who need practical advice on how to look for jobs.

★ Outstanding G&P School Volunteer Engagement and Leadership Award

For the graduate/professional school alumni association or chapter that best demonstrates leadership in strategic planning, volunteer recruitment, financial management and stewardship

Yale Divinity School

Working closely with the dean and other leaders of the Yale Divinity School, and guided by advice from the AYA, the YDS Alumni Board has worked to empower and energize alumni to support the School’s mission. Driven by a desire for inclusivity and thoughtful process, the board has crafted a strategic plan on

AYA Board of Governors Excellence Awards

alumni involvement at YDS that is situated within the context of larger trends in theological study, higher education and society at large, and which has received enthusiastic backing from Dean Gregory Sterling. With their collaborative spirit, the board's members have provided a model for broad engagement as they work to fine-tune the duties and responsibilities of an alumni organization.

★ Outstanding G&P School Day of Service Award

For the graduate/professional school alumni association or chapter that demonstrates the most successful Yale Day of Service engagement

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

FES wins this award for events led by its Alumni Association board in partnership with its graduating class. The Class of 2014 worked with the Urban Resources Initiative to plant trees along the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway and conduct trail maintenance in the Yale-Myers Forest. A separate event, held in Louisville and led by Dean Peter Crane, partnered with the Yale Club of Kentucky to bring



together local alumni from FES, Yale College and the Schools of Medicine, Music and Public Health to work on an environmental project at the Parklands of Floyds Fork. The combined efforts of so many FES alumni, faculty, staff and students in the 2014 Yale Day of Service were truly inspiring.

★ Outstanding SIG Volunteer Engagement and Leadership Award

For the Shared Interest Group (SIG) that best demonstrates leadership in strategic planning, volunteer recruitment, financial management and stewardship

Yale Alumni Nonprofit Alliance

YANA had explosive growth in the past year, establishing new regional chapters in San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. The growth was no accident: the group's website has a tool kit to help its members organize new chapters and engage new volunteers. Some of these supporters helped YANA plan its first conference, "Social Enterprise: Turning Vision into Reality," held in New York City this past April. The conference was open to all, embodying YANA's desire to bring people of all ages together at its events, and reflecting its mission statement "to treat every person as if she or he had infinite value, and to give that person what is needed to productively express that value."

★ **Outstanding SIG Reunion or Event Award**

For the Shared Interest Group (SIG) event that exhibits overall excellence in participation, marketing, educational experience and implementation

Yale Spizzwinks Alumni Association

The Spizzwinks Centennial Reunion was a year-long celebration culminating in a four-day event in New Haven. Preparations included rehearsals and gatherings in five cities, the production of a video history, the publication of a 200-page hardbound historical anthology, the restoration of transcribed sheet music, new audio recordings for an enhanced alumni website, and the creation of souvenir hats, shirts, tote bags and other mementos. Members of the reunion planning team called every known alumnus of the group with a personal invitation to attend, and ultimately 65% of all living Spizzwinks came back to campus for the reunion. A special highlight of the reunion was how Spizzwink alumni mentored the current group of student singers.

★ **SIG Day of Service Award**

For the Shared Interest Group (SIG) that demonstrates the most successful Yale Day of Service engagement

Yale Veterans Association

Building on a multiyear collaboration with the New England Healthcare System of the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, the YVA held its Day of Service project at the Blind Rehabilitation Center of the V.A. Hospital in West Haven for the third year in a row. Attracting 40 attendees and 20 blind veterans, the day offered hospital tours and hands-on training so that volunteers could gain insight into the experience of being visually impaired. This year added a second

track in which the veterans and volunteers could work together to renovate a hospital garden. The YVA works with blind veterans throughout the year, including one program where its members can take them to a Yale football game.

★ **Outstanding Collaboration Award**

For the program or event that best exemplifies an integrated effort among two or more alumni association groups

Yale Club of St. Louis

In honor of the city's 250th anniversary, the Yale Club of St. Louis partnered with Washington University, the French culture group Les Amis, the Osage Indian tribe, the Missouri Historical Museum and the AYA to sponsor the STL 250 Symposium, a day-long celebration of the city's positive urban progress and history that included lectures, lunch, and a 200-guest formal dinner attended by Osage chiefs and dignitaries from France, Spain and Quebec. The culmination of a year-long planning effort, the STL 250 Symposium – entitled “A Great City from the Start” – not only brought the Yale Club and its host city closer together but also energized local alumni, increased awareness of the Club, and brought recognition of Yale through favorable media coverage.

**A GREAT CITY FROM THE START:
THE FOUNDING & LASTING SIGNIFICANCE OF ST. LOUIS**



★ **Outstanding Innovation Award (Tie)**

For a new event or program, preferably one that has completed its second year of implementation

Yale Musical Theater of the Air

Inspired by the centennial of Cole Porter’s graduation from Yale, a cadre of Yale alumni coalesced to mount a radio-style version of the classic American musical “My Fair Lady” with original dialogue, orchestrations, costumes, lighting and on-stage sound effects before a full house at the Shubert Theater. Collaborating with on-campus groups from Yale College and the Schools of Drama and Music, YMTA brought together 100 alumni and students for two delightful evenings of theater. Accompanied by master classes, teas and intergenerational mentoring, the project reconnected alumni with Yale and each other in a new model for volunteer engagement.

Yale Club of Washington, DC

This past year, the Yale Club of Washington, DC organized something no Yale Club had ever tried before: a for-profit educational tour. Inspired by the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the five-day trip to Gettysburg – which was led by a Yale PhD – offered college-level lectures, on-site battlefield tours, and access to private collections and properties not normally open to the public. It was conceived not only as an educational venture but also as a model to generate funding to support the Club’s community outreach and service projects. It succeeded in both goals, and provided an enjoyable opportunity for Yale Club members to have fellowship with alumni from outside the DC area.

★ Emerging Leaders Award

For the alumni association that best identifies, recruits, engages and sustains new volunteer leaders

Yale Club of San Francisco

The Yale Club of San Francisco's emerging leaders are proving key to making it a dynamic and innovative organization. Young alumni have been fully integrated into Club leadership, where they offer fresh ideas and lead entrepreneurial initiatives; the Club's board consists of college and G&P alumni from each of the past five decades, and its president and two vice presidents all graduated within the past five years. Numerous Club events have been planned by other recent graduates, and the Club believes that its emerging leaders help ensure that it stays relevant as the interests and needs of its constituency evolve.



★ Outstanding Student Engagement Award

For the alumni association program or event that best integrates and engages current Yale students

Yale Swimming & Diving Association

The YSDA has taken an active interest in advancing the careers of Yale swimmers and divers long after they finish their time in the pool. Led by board members Alexis Lerner Katz '95 and Moira McCloskey '07, the group has helped undergrads get a sense of possible future career fields by matching them up with YSDA alumni in these areas, and organizing panels of YSDA alumni to introduce students to the many different career paths available beyond the conventional consulting, finance, MD and JD routes. The group has also held annual mock interview workshops with current students to work on the skills and mindset they need in order to be successful in their job applications.

★ Best Marketing, Branding and Communication Effort

For the effort that best exemplifies a successful communications effort based on design, creativity, implementation and response

Yale Latino Alumni Association

Luz y Verdad, YLAA's newsletter, functions to strengthen and unite Yale's Latino alumni. Published just once in 2011, it has grown into a monthly e-mail with an average viewing rate of 33% this year. The newsletter allows the YLAA to connect Latino alumni back to campus and promote opportunities for them to become further involved in the Yale community. For example, the YLAA's Mentoring Initiative, through which 25 alumni act as one-on-one mentors to current

undergraduates, recruited its volunteers almost exclusively through the newsletter. *Luz y Verdad* also helped to identify a dozen more unmatched alumni who will be activated as the program continues to expand in the next few months.

★ Most Creative Use of Technology and Social Networking Media Award

For efforts “in front of the curve” based on design, creativity, implementation and response

Yale Club of Philadelphia

Over the past two years the Yale Club of Philadelphia has implemented a comprehensive digital communications strategy embodied in a cutting-edge new website, an active social media presence, and a flexible system of e-mail communications. Three alumni work as a team to maintain all these channels and to regularly check metrics on how many people are being engaged, with the goal of reaching Philadelphia Yalies of all ages through a steady stream of news. Once the Club posts an event on its website, it is automatically tweeted and shared on Facebook, and the monthly *Boola Bulletin* markets the Club by highlighting upcoming activities. All this outreach has yielded increased viewership at a minimal cost.



THE BOOLA BULLETIN

The Official Newsletter of the Yale Club of Philadelphia