

Written by Abeni Hill
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Fatima Muhammad was named the after-school project director of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB) last month.

The YCB goal is to provide Minneapolis youth with opportunities that promote overall well being including a substantial education and overall in health and safety. Muhammad has already begun working with the YCB to uphold its mission.

"My focus has been youth development," said Muhammad.

Recently, Muhammad has been working with YCB to create a website for parents, caregivers and youth. According to Muhammad, this online tool will help the community have access to high quality after-school programming.

"Now the city will be able to have a resource that all families and youth will be able to access for programs during out of school time," said Muhammad. "Families will have access to safe and high quality opportunities."

Muhammad said after-school programming could help youth explore different aspects of their personality and help them gain independence. "Youth need variety to develop their own person," said Muhammad, who said being involved in an after-school program can enhance a student's interest while diminishing the chance to be involved in negative activities. The program will offer a variety of different types of activities such as athletics, music and theater.

"Studies show that youth not engaged in out of school time are more likely to engage in delinquency," said Muhammad.

Muhammad said she is looking forward to this new role.

"I am excited to be the one delegated to leading this project," said Muhammad.

While Muhammad's new role focuses on development of after-school programming, she has a background working with youth after school programming and youth development at the YWCA. During her years at the YWCA, Muhammad led the Black Achiever's Program.

Prior to her work with the YWCA, Muhammad worked with young people who were dealing with challenging home lives and helped them become independent.

□ **Fatima Muhammad: Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board(YCB) After-school project director**

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Muhammad said her passion is youth empowerment.

"If we don't invest in youth, we will fail as a society," said Muhammad. "They are our future, they are our now."

For more information about YCB and the upcoming after-school programming visit www.ycb.org