

# WYSE TRAINING COMPONENT 1: THE WYSE NATIONAL NETWORK

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## WYSE: Mission, Vision, Pillars

### Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network

#### Mission

To empower young women by providing the resources and support necessary to make positive life choices and create community change

#### Vision

To create a world in which all women are empowered to determine their future and effect change

### Our Pillars

#### Critical Thinking and Decision Making

WYSE women explore fully and think deeply about significant issues in order to make informed, deliberate decisions.

#### Identity and Self Esteem

WYSE women strive to recognize, explore, and proudly express who they are as individuals.

#### Commitment to Mentorship

WYSE women believe in the power of positive relationships to change lives. Through commitment to mentorship, WYSE women dedicate themselves to being a positive influence and role model for those around them.

#### Community Change

WYSE women strive to make a better society by gathering information, spreading awareness, and taking action on issues that are meaningful to them.

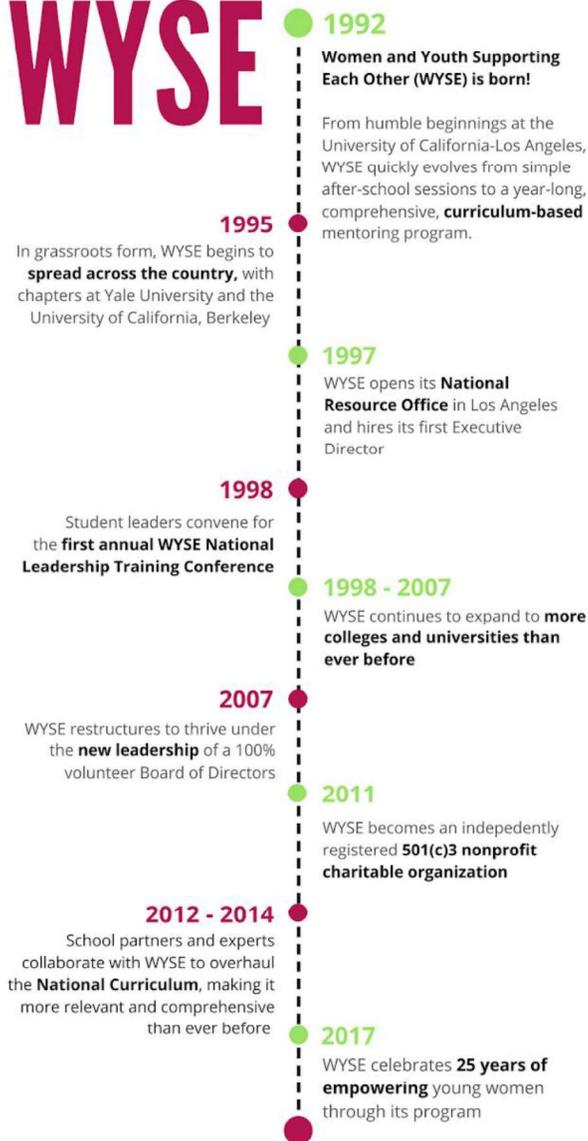
#### Safe Community and Exploration

WYSE women express their ideas, ask questions, and learn in a safe, open, and accepting community. WYSE women encourage others to speak up and help each other discover new ideas.

# The WYSE Herstory

## Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network

### A BRIEF HERSTORY OF WYSE



WYSE was founded by three UCLA students in 1992 who after working with homeless families, were alarmed by the fact that the fastest growing population among the homeless was single mothers and their children. They designed the WYSE program initially to prevent teenage pregnancy and single motherhood by providing young women with contraceptive information. As they organized other students, the group found that teenage pregnancy was just one of the many issues middle and high school girls faced. Low self-esteem, a lack of awareness of future options, and violence in their communities were among many other issues preventing young women from achieving their greatest potential. Thus, over the next five years WYSE developed from simple after-school sessions to include a comprehensive year-long curriculum striving to inform girls of all the issues that can contribute to their disempowerment.

With the graduation of the founders from UCLA, WYSE's national expansion began. First it went to Yale and UC Berkeley, then to Stanford, the University of Chicago, Harvard, USC, CSU Northridge, and eventually to NYU and CSU Long Beach. In 1995, WYSE hired our first paid staff member to provide national support to the various local student-run branches, and in 1997, received generous funding from the California Wellness Foundation to initiate the National Resource Office which would provide much needed branch support and technical assistance.

### THE PRESENT & FUTURE OF WYSE

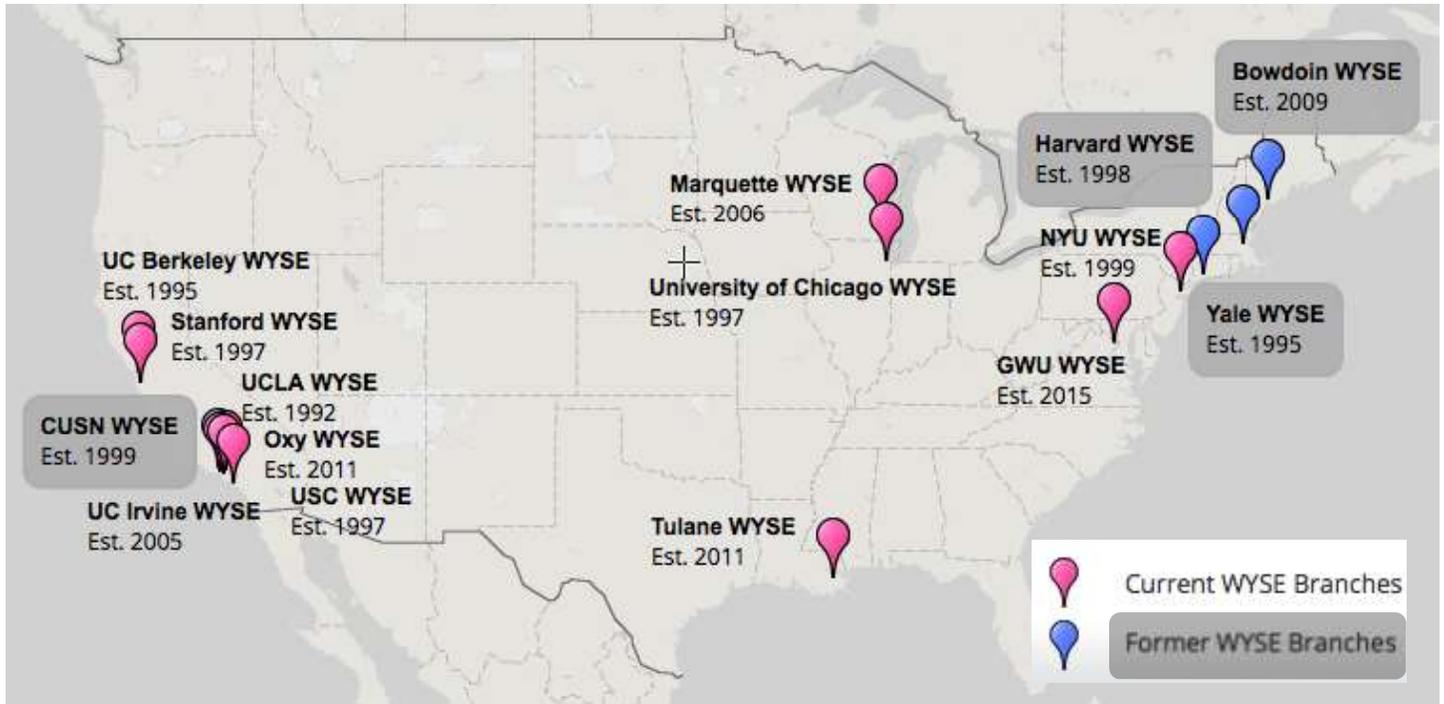
Today, WYSE is governed and fully operated by the National Board of Directors, a group of incredibly dedicated volunteers with a passion for social justice, feminism, and youth empowerment. For a quarter-century, WYSE has succeeded in providing close to **5,000** adolescent girls with the information, resources, and support necessary to make informed decisions and to create community change!



Today, the WYSE is nationally guided by the WYSE Board of Directors. We have succeeded in providing more than one thousand young women with critical information and leadership development, and challenged them to take action to inspire positive change in their communities. Several of these young women are now high school and college students who continue to participate in the program, or have become involved in decision-making for the organization as a whole. Together, we make up the WYSE National Network calling for a better future for women, girls, and the communities in which they live.

# Where Is WYSE?

## Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network



## The WYSE National Board of Directors

### Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network

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#### MELISSA PIERCE

#### Board Chair

Melissa Pierce joined the WYSE National Board of Directors in 2005. Melissa graduated from Stanford University in 2003 with a B.A. in Urban Studies and Planning, where she served as a WYSE mentor and director. Melissa lives in Atlanta, GA.

**Branch Buddies:** Tulane, Marquette

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#### STEPHANIE KENNEDY

#### Vice Chair

Stephanie graduated from the University of Southern California with a B.A. in Communication. At USC, she was involved in WYSE from 2010 to 2013 and served as Executive Director from 2012 to 2013. Stephanie is currently studying Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

**Branch Buddies:** USC, GWU

[stephanie@wyse.org](mailto:stephanie@wyse.org)



#### LAUREN GORSKI

#### Communications Chair

Lauren Gorski joined the WYSE National Board of Directors in 2013. Lauren holds a B.A. from the University of California, Irvine and a Masters in Professional Writing from USC. She was a WYSE mentor at the UCI Branch from 2007–2011 and served as Executive Director for two years. Lauren lives in San Francisco, CA.

**Branch Buddies:** UC Irvine, UC Berkeley, Stanford

[lauren@wyse.org](mailto:lauren@wyse.org)



#### ANNA SHAW-AMOAH

#### Operations & Performance Chair

Anna Shaw-Amoah has been on the WYSE National Board of Directors since 2015. She holds B.A. from NYU and an M.P.A. in Nonprofit Management & Policy from the same university. Anna was a WYSE mentor and director at the NYU branch from 2009–2012. Anna lives in Philadelphia, PA.

**Branch Buddies:** University of Chicago, Occidental

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#### NATHALIE SARJU

#### Program Chair

Nathalie joined the WYSE National Board of Directors in 2018. Nathalie graduated from the University of Central Florida after transferring from New York University, where she was involved in WYSE as a freshman. Nathalie lives in New York City and is an advocate for survivors of domestic violence through Jahajee Sisters and a mental health therapist for children.

**Branch Buddies:** NYU, UCLA

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## Critical Elements of a WYSE Branch

### Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network

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#### **ONE-ON-ONE MENTORSHIP**

WYSE Mentor-Mentee pairs spend time together during planned WYSE sessions and events, and go on other fun outings together as well.



#### **WEEKLY SESSIONS**

interactive group mentorship is carried out through weekly sessions on important topics in mentees' lives.



#### **REFLECTION MEETINGS**

Learn from session feedback and regroup with other mentors. Discuss next session and prepare with any relevant training topics.



#### **GROUP ACTIVITIES**

Mentor-only and Mentor-Mentee events are necessary to build WYSE community, foster group bonds, and create opportunities for mentorship.



#### **COMMUNITY ACTION**

Branches encourage mentees and mentors to carry WYSE values outside of session and make a difference in their community.



## WYSE National Norms

### Mentor Training Component: 1. The WYSE National Network

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**WYSE is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit mentoring organization. As such, we must uphold the integrity of our national organization, brand, mission, and core operating principles by ensuring that certain elements of our program are consistent across all branches, no matter what. It is critical that all WYSE branches are held to the same standards and operate in alignment with WYSE's national structure and the Critical Elements of a WYSE Branch.**

**Key norms are as follows:**

**1. THE WYSE CURRICULUM** - The WYSE curriculum is a large part of what makes our program unique and what separates us from other mentoring and after-school programs for adolescent girls. Branches must present all three sections of the curriculum each program year; branches may NOT choose (at the university or middle school's discretion) to opt out of any of the three sections of the curriculum. Thus, branches must operate within schools and frameworks that fully support the entire curriculum. At the beginning of the semester, branches must submit to the Board a schedule of planned sessions.

**2. MIDDLE SCHOOL TARGET** - WYSE serves young women in middle school, grades 6-8. WYSE is not designed for 5th graders and is not currently positioned for high school adolescents. For branches serving more than one grade level, sessions should be split by grade so that content can be tailored accordingly.

**3. WEEKLY SESSION and REFLECTION MEETING** - Branches visit their school sites weekly. All branches must conduct a weekly hour-long reflection meeting to review and reflect upon the previous session, and to prepare for and discuss the upcoming session.

**4. TRAINING** - Comprehensive and intentional mentor training is required at the start of each program year. Components of this training are standardized at the national level and include, but are not limited to the following: diversity and Cultural Awareness, role plays, national org structure, program expectations, and the Five Ws of WYSE. In addition, all branches should conduct an additional mini- training (2 hours) in January prior to the start of Unit 2 in the curriculum. Fall training (4 hours) should be designed in accordance with the parameters outlined in the WYSE Mentor Training Handbook.



**5. COMMUNICATION & ACCOUNTABILITY** - It is important that branch directors respond to all Board communications in a timely manner. Branches commit to three formal check-ins with the WYSE Board each program year. These check-ins are intended to troubleshoot any challenges that may rise, communicate national WYSE updates, and gather ongoing feedback as to how the Board can best support branch operations. Branches also commit to adhering to all stated policies and program expectations at the national level, including criminal history background checks at the start of each program year. In exchange, the Board is committed to transparency and responsiveness to all branch inquiries and requests for support.

**6. COMMITMENT** - Continuity and consistency is imperative in both leadership and mentorship. WYSE mentors must commit to a full school year of service. If a mentor knows up front that she cannot fulfill this commitment (eg. she is studying abroad Spring semester), she will not be assigned to a mentee, but she can still participate in group mentoring in the Fall. Mentors who are paired with a mentee must spend time with their mentee outside of session and be in touch with their mentee each week outside of session.

**7. COMMUNITY ACTION** - Community action in WYSE should be an ongoing process involving both mentors and mentees. The WYSE National Movement is conducted each spring when all branches simultaneously participate in an agreed upon grassroots community action project.

**8. OBJECTIVE & EMPOWERING** - WYSE mentors deliver content in a manner that is objective so as to raise awareness and then empower mentees to make healthy and informed decisions on their own. WYSE is about instilling in young women the ability to be problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and effective decision makers. WYSE does not pass judgment or teach a "right or wrong" approach. Remember: Resist the "Righting" reflex!

**9. THE WYSE BRAND** - It is imperative that branches communicate their connection to a national organization in all external affairs, recruitment, and PR communications. Branches must all use the national WYSE logo to represent their part of the national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. In addition, branches may create and promote their own logos.

**10. EXPANSION** - WYSE aims to broaden its footprint to serve more communities nationwide. All expansion endeavors are thoughtfully and intentionally initiated and managed by the Board.