

**For Immediate Release
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**YESS MENTORING PROGRAM CELEBRATES FOR WEST, NORTH AND LINCOLN
HS STUDENTS A DECLINE IN DROPOUT AND INCREASE IN GRADUATION RATE
AND
WEST HS YESS PEER MENTOR NAMED BILL GATES MILLENIUM SCHOLAR**

The YESS Institute, a non-profit peer mentoring and leadership program for at-risk youth in Denver, celebrates a remarkable year at **6 p.m., Tuesday, May 10 at West High School**, 951 Elati St., Denver, CO 80204 **The YESS Institute empowers North, West and Lincoln HS youth leaders to teach their peers how to be successful in school and in life.**

At the May 10 dinner, all YESS mentors and mentees will be recognized for their academic progress and will share their experiences. Isaac Maldonado, a 10th grade mentee at **North High School** who has significantly improved his grades and demonstrated personal growth and maturity expressed how he felt about YESS Mentoring: "To me it means there are people who WANT to help you pass. I like it because I made new friends and brought my grades up. My mentor, Malu, is awesome." Mario Calandrelli, an 11th grade mentor at **West High School** explains how he has benefitted from YESS Mentoring, "I have to change my life first before I can change another, and that's what I did. I gave my example and now I do positive things."

The **keynote address** will be provided by **95.7 FM The Party DJ, Issa Lopez**. YESS student leaders will MC the event. Exciting door prizes and raffles will also be available for students and families, including a home personal computer donated by The Digital Bridge Foundation,.

All of our students have reason to celebrate. Among them is West High YESS Mentor, Adolfo Valdez. Valdez has been awarded the **Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship** and was selected as a Daniels Fund Scholar. Valdez is a first-generation high school graduate, who will attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study pre-med. This is the second year in a row that a YESS Mentor receives the prestigious Millennium Scholarship. **Only 1,000 students receive this scholarship nationwide.**

Other YESS mentors who received the **Daniels Fund Scholarship** include: West High School Reyes Rascon and North High School Malu Veltze.

About YESS Institute: Since 2001, YESS has offered **peer mentoring programs** at 10 Denver Metro High Schools. YESS focuses on **empowering primarily Latino high school students to be positive role models for high-risk incoming freshmen**. The YESS Mentoring program is an intensive in-school peer mentoring program that re-engages failing students within the **Attend, Attach, Achieve School Engagement Model**. The program is operated at North, West and Lincoln High Schools. **Long-term results show** a 100% of peer mentors attend college, 50% of served freshmen become mentors and 94% of all served freshmen have graduated or on track to graduate. For more information visit **www.yessinstitute.org**