

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Michael Trout

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2021-033

Michael Trout, executive director of Young Men's Education Network (YMEN), was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: September 13, 2021 Location: Chicago, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:20 / 1.34 hrs.

Interview being
processed.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 2, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Michael Trout, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2021-033

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Michael Trout was born in December of 1969 in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Thornton Fractional South High School and graduated in 1988. While at TF South he was active in choir, the National Honor Society, tennis, speech, and theater. Trout went on to pursue a bachelor's degree in business and economics at Wheaton College, graduating in 1992. After graduation, Trout began working at North Lawndale Development Corporation. After three years, he formed the Young Men's Education Network (YMEN), where, at the time of the interview, he had been serving as the executive director for twenty-four years. The program serves 300 of Lawndale's youth through partnerships with five local schools. They offer after-school and weekend programs six days a week. YMEN has also established five spaces for urban gardening and outdoor sports, a 9,000 square foot building, partnerships with the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota, and helped build two schools in Uganda.

During the interview Trout discusses the history of YMEN and reviewed its current programs. These include a variety of outreach programs like after school and weekend programs, urban gardening, college scholarships, and more. Trout discusses how YMEN functioned from March 2020 through September 2021, a time of pandemic restrictions, social unrest, and economic/employment challenges. Trout and YMEN have been working with hospitals to promote vaccination efforts because Lawndale has been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Trout also expressed his future concern regarding the loss of learning from the 2020-2021 school year, as well as the potential impact of future eviction notices. Trout details his own experience with COVID-19.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Young Men's Education Network (YMEN); Non-profits; COVID-19 pandemic's effect on non-profits; Chicago, Illinois.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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