



Welcome to True2U!

Laura Huffman, MAEd
Program Manager, True2U

Caroline Brennan
Senior Coordinator, Youth
Mentoring Programs

Kristen Tellaisha
Program Coordinator,
True2U





Agenda

- Summer Leadership Academy Recap
- True2U Overview
- Curriculum Overview
- The Mentor Mindset
- Being a True2U Mentor





Summer Leadership Academy 202 6

- Anton Grdina
- Bolton
- Clara E. Westropp
- Dike
- East Clark
- Euclid Park
- George Washington Carver
- Halle
- Harvey Rice (3)
- Joseph M. Gallagher
- Marion Sterling
- Nathan Hale
- Riverside
- Scranton
- Stephanie Tubbs Jones
- Wilbur Wright (2)



True2U Partners





True2U Overview





2026 - 2027 True2U Program Calendar



Welcome to True2U!

Mentor Orientation
Required to attend one

In person at NLI Office

- Sat. Sept. 26th at 10 am
- Tues. Sept. 29th at 6 pm

Virtual via Zoom

- Thurs. Oct. 1st at 12 pm

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October (Session 1)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Mentor/Teacher Meet & Greet

- Oct. 13th - 16th

The exact date and time will be assigned

Session 1 Curriculum Training

- Tues. Oct. 13th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. Oct. 15th at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 1

- October 20th - 23rd

Day/Time based on your school

November (Session 2)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Session 2 Curriculum Training

- Tues. Nov. 10th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. Nov. 12th at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 2

- November 17th - 20th

Day/Time based on your school

December (Session 3)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Session 3 Curriculum Training

- Tues. Dec. 1st at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. Dec. 3rd at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 3

- December 8th - 11th

Day/Time based on your school

January (Session 4)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Session 4 Curriculum Training

- Tues. Jan. 5th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. Jan. 7th at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 4

- January 12th - 15th

Day/Time based on your school

February (Session 5)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Session 5 Curriculum Training

- Tues. Feb. 9th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. Feb. 11th at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 5

- February 16th - 19th

Day/Time based on your school

March (Session 6)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Session 6 Curriculum Training

- Tues. March 9th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. March 11th at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 6

- March 16th - 19th

Day/Time based on your school

April (Session 7)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Session 7 Curriculum Training

- Tues. April 20th at 6 pm at NLI
- Thurs. April 22nd at 12 pm via Zoom

In-School Session 7

- April 27th - 30th

Day/Time based on your school

True2U in-school session weeks are listed in calendar months above and occur according to your school's assigned day and time. Program schedule subject to change



What is True2U?

- Started in 2015
- Volunteer group mentoring program that helps **ALL 8th graders** in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District focus on:
 - Learning about themselves and what is important to them
 - Leveraging their strengths & interests when thinking about careers
 - Their opportunities in high school and beyond





Program Objectives

- Encourage personal development and career exploration as part of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District middle school experience
- Provide tools to help scholars choose and make a smooth transition to high school based on a clear sense of their personal identity, goals, interests, values
- Engage the human capital of our community directly with scholars





Mentoring Sessions

- Mentors matched with a CMSD teacher & 8th grade class
 - Mentor assignments will be sent via email in early October
- Mentor trainings are offered the week prior to each session
 - One in-person and one virtual
- Mentors collaborate to lead 7 two hour sessions
 - Teachers are there to assist, not facilitate
- Sessions take place in the school building and are facilitated using the True2U curriculum





School Feedback

- On a scale of one to five (1-5), how would you rate your students' involvement and participation in True2U?
 - 3.99 out of 5
- On a scale of one to five (1-5), how beneficial do you think True2U is for your students?
 - 4.01 out of 5
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the True2U program?
 - 4.04 out of 5





Guaranteed 8th Grade Experiences According to CMSD

- **School Choice Fair**
Explore CMSD high school options, programs, and school communities.
- **CTE Fair**
Learn about available Career and Technical Education pathways and programs.
- **High School Visit**
Visit prospective high schools to experience the campus, programs, and culture firsthand.
- **True2U**
Participate in mentoring and career exploration experiences that help students identify their strengths, interests, and future goals.
- **Graduation Planning**
Develop SMART goals and map out the academic journey toward graduation.





Guaranteed 9th Grade Experiences According to CMSD

Graduation Plans

- Develop SMART goals and map out the academic journey toward graduation. (*freshman seminar*)
- Revisit goals throughout the year to monitor progress and stay on track.

Commitment to Graduate

- Participate in a graduation-style ceremony affirming a commitment to complete high school.
- Begin identifying goals and plans for life after graduation.

College & Career Pathways Fair

- Explore college, career, CTE, and postsecondary opportunities.
- Connect with colleges, employers, and community partners to learn about future pathways.

Freshman Seminar

- Build the skills needed to successfully navigate high school.
- Explore career pathways, strengthen social-emotional skills, and earn industry-recognized credentials.





Curriculum Updates 2026

- Removed goal setting activity
- Brought in information about CMSD Pathways
- Updated Reflection Questions for each session
- Added Personality Type Bingo
- Emphasis on scholars using information rather than just reviewing information





Curriculum

True2U Curriculum Guide ☼ Year 12 ☼ 2026-2027



True2U Tracker



Name: _____



True2U: Helping Students Discover more about themselves and prepare for their futures.





True2U Program Overview

Session 1
Who Am I Today?
Oct. 20th - 23rd

- Welcome to True2U/Activity: My Name Tent
- My Strengths
- This or That: Decision Making for High School Activity
- Future-Focused Reflection: Opportunities and Obstacles

Session 2
My Career
Exploration
Nov. 17th - 20th

- Icebreaker: Name Game
- Career Clusters Inventory
- Career Clusters Exploration: Posters
- Career Clusters Exploration: Presentation/Gallery Walk
- Future-Focused Reflection: High School Matching

Session 3
My Personality Type
Dec. 8th - 11th

- Icebreaker: Notecard Basketball
- Practicing My Personality Type
- Personality Type Inventory
- Personality Bingo and Future-Focused Reflection: Personality Strengths



Session 4
My Values & Choices
Jan 12th - 15th

- Icebreaker: This or That
- Making Good Choices
- Personal Values
- Future-Focused Reflection: Decisions and Values

Session 5
My Learning Style
Feb. 16th - 19th

- Practice Your Learning Style
- Learning Styles Inventory
- Future-Focused Reflection: Understanding Your Learning Style
- **7th Grade Advising: Letter to My Future Self**

Session 6
Preparing for My
Future
Mar. 16th - 19th

- Icebreaker: Jolly Rancher
- Impressions
- My Brag Sheet
- Mock Interviews
- Future-Focused Reflection: Preparing for High School

Session 7
My Year Reflection
Apr. 27th - 30th

- My Career Exploration
- True2U/ CMSD End of Year Wrap Up
- Future-Focused True2U Reflection
- High School Visions



Session 1

Who Am I Today?



Overview

In this session, scholars will be introduced to their mentors and the True2U program. They will begin exploring their personal strengths and reflect on how self-awareness is an important foundation for future success. Session 1 is designed to help scholars start answering the question: *Who am I today?*

Session Spotlights

- Group Connection
- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Knowledge
- Social Awareness

Learning Objectives

- Get to know the mentors and learn more about their peers
- Review, understand, and practice group guidelines
- Investigate their strengths and how those strengths can support career exploration
- Reflect on opportunities, obstacles, and personal identity

Mentor Preparation

- ☐ Review Session 1: Curriculum Guide, worksheets, activities, and reflection questions
- ☐ Communicate with mentor partner(s)
 - Divide activity facilitation responsibilities
- ☐ Develop talking points
- ☐ Prepare your Session 1 PowerPoint
- ☐ Think about what guidelines are important for you and your mentor partner during the sessions
 - Create 2-3 that are important to the group's success
- ☐ Create a My Name Tent
- ☐ Take the Strengths Inventory





SESSION 1: Timing and Materials

Session Activities	Time
Welcome to True2U! (10 minutes) • Session 1 PowerPoint • True2U Trackers • Permanent Marker(s) • Pencils • Welcome to True2U! info sheet (Curriculum Guide pg. 1.7, Tracker pg. 1) Activity 1(a): My Name (20 minutes) • My Name template (Curriculum Guide pg. 1.8, Tracker pg. 2) • Name Tents • Markers	30 minutes
Activity 1(b): My Strengths • My Strengths Inventory (Curriculum Guide pgs. 1.10 - 1.11, Tracker pgs. 4 - 5)	20 minutes
BREAK • Snacks	5 minutes
Activity 1(c): Practicing My Strengths • My Strengths worksheets (Curriculum Guide pgs. 1.14 - 1.15, Tracker pgs. 6 - 7) • Timer	25 minutes
Activity 1(d): This or That - Decision Making for High School • Questions in Curriculum Guide pg. 1.17	25 minutes
Future-Focused Reflection: Opportunities and Obstacles • Questions (Curriculum Guide pg. 1.18, Tracker pg. 8)	15 minutes
Total Time	120 minutes

Mentor Tips:

- True2U scholar materials are in the box at your school.
- During individual activities, circulate and assist as needed.
- Encourage creativity: there's no wrong way to do it, everyone's ideas bring something valuable.
- Keep it moving. Don't linger too long on one question/statement if it's not benefiting the group.
- Model active listening by nodding, thanking scholars for their input, asking follow-up questions, and restating their ideas so both you and their peers understand correctly.
- Prepare, know and understand the material, be confident.
- Stay flexible by adapting questions/statements or time as needed.
- Praise effort, not just correct answers.
- Use a timer to keep rounds on schedule.
- Take notes on scholar feedback in your True2U Curriculum Guide for program improvement efforts.
- Collect all True2U materials and return them to the True2U materials box at the of the session.





Session 1 Step-by-Step Activity Guide

Before you start your session, set up your Session 1 PowerPoint using the classroom Clever Touch/Computer Screen.

Welcome to True2U! and Activity 1(a) My Name Tent (30 minutes)

Welcome to True2U! (5 min.)

◆ Mentors:

- ☐ Greet scholars and introduce yourself
- ☐ Distribute True2U Trackers and pencils
- ☐ Using Session 1 PowerPoint:
 - Provide a quick program overview, Welcome to True2U! info sheet (Tracker pg. 1)
 - Review Session 1 agenda

● Scholars:

- Write their name on their Tracker using a permanent marker

Activity 1(a): My Name Tent (25 min.)

◆ Mentors:

- ☐ Introduce My Name Tent activity (Tracker pg. 2)
- ☐ Share your own completed Name Tent as an example

● Scholars:

- Create their Name Tent
- Decorate with words, symbols, and drawings that express who they are

◆ ● Mentors and Scholars: Debrief, have scholars share 1 corner of their Name Tent with the group.

- ☐ Have a group discussion about guidelines for True2U sessions to set expectations.



Activity 1(b) Strengths Inventory (20 minutes)

◆ **Mentors:**

- ☐ Introduce My Strengths Inventory (Tracker pgs. 4 - 5)
- ☐ Options: Read each question aloud as a group, or have scholars read and complete individually

● **Scholars:**

- Complete inventory, tally results, record/circle their top 3 strengths in Tracker

◆ ● **Mentors and Scholars:** Debrief, have a few scholars share their results and thoughts

5 MINUTE BREAK

Activity 1(c) Practicing My Strengths (25 minutes)

◆ **Mentors:**

- ☐ Introduce My Strengths worksheets (Tracker pgs. 6 -7)
 - Scholars will do 3 short activities
 - Explain and do one activity at a time
 - Each activity lasts about 4 minutes, including instructions and debrief (use timer)

● **Scholars:** Participate in 3 activities

1. Logic Puzzle
2. Squiggle Drawing
3. Silent Line-Up

◆ ● **Mentors and Scholars:** Debrief after each activity, with a final debrief after completing all 3 activities

Activity 1(d) This or That: Decision Making for High School (25 minutes)

◆ **Mentors:**

- ☐ Introduce This or That
- ☐ Facilitate the activity by asking **4-5 statements** (Choose from the list provided in Curriculum Guide pg.1.17)
- ☐ Pause every few prompts to discuss, and encourage volunteers to briefly explain their choices

● **Scholars:**

- Participate by standing on one side of the room for "This" and the other side for "That"

Future-Focused Reflection: Opportunities and Obstacles (15 minutes)

◆ **Mentors:**

- ☐ Introduce reflection questions (Tracker pg. 8)
- ☐ Engage scholars in a discussion around strengths and connecting it to their future

● **Scholars:**

- Individual reflection, answer questions in their Tracker

◆ ● **Mentors and Scholars:**

- ☐ Reflect on this session by highlighting the key points and what lessons can be taken from the activities



Detailed Facilitation (Study Guide)

Be sure to review, edit, and add your personal touches to the Session 1 PowerPoint template to be used during your session.

Welcome to True2U! and Activity 1(a) My Name Tent (30 minutes)

 **Goal:** Scholars learn about the program, review classroom guidelines, and get to know their mentors and peers.

 **Distribute:** Trackers, pencils, and permanent markers.

Welcome to True2U! (10 minutes)

 **Mentors:** Introduce yourself as their True2U Mentor for this year.

☐ Welcome scholars to their first True2U session!

☐ Have them write their name clearly on the cover of their Tracker.

- Scholars will need to share permanent markers.
- Collect permanent markers when they are all finished.

☐ **Using the PowerPoint:** Review Session 1 agenda

☐ Review the Welcome to True2U! info sheet, walk through the key highlights (Tracker pg. 1)

- Volunteer mentoring program that takes place once a month.
- The program is designed to help scholars learn more about themselves—what they are good at, enjoy, and how that connects to their future career or life goals.
- Mentors will help scholars explore who they are, what they are interested in, and what possibilities exist for their future.
- Scholars use their True2U Trackers during every session to reflect, set goals, and learn more about themselves.
- Participate in group activities, talk about high school choices, and connect it all to the bigger picture—their dreams and plans!

Share: Why Mentoring Matters. Why you're a True2U volunteer mentor, your personal experience, etc.

Discussion Prompt: Ask a few scholars to briefly share their thoughts.

- *"What stands out to you on this page and what are you curious or excited about?"*
- *"Why do you think it might be important to understand what you love, what you're good at, what you value, and what kind of life you want?"*

Wrap Up:

- *"Getting to know yourself, building confidence, learning about different careers, can prepare you for high school and beyond. Our sessions are built around a variety of activities to help you explore your interests, strengths, and career ideas."*
- ☐ Ask if scholars have any questions.



Visiting the Schools

In-person – when you arrive:

1. Enter the school building with:
 - a. Legal form of ID
2. Go through Security
3. Enter the Main Office
 - a. Speak with Main Office staff, let them know you are there for True2U
 - b. Office staff should scan your driver's license or ID
 - c. Put on the provided Volunteer Badge
 - d. Once signed in, you can proceed to the location of your conference/sessions
4. When your session is over, check out in the office before leaving





Out of School Experiences

- True2U is working closely with CMSD to make the OSEs as beneficial as possible to scholars
- CMSD has put an emphasis on high school readiness in the middle school years
- Past OSEs - Visit a college and/ business
- Our goal is to let scholars focus on the big upcoming decision of high school choice.





The Mentor Mindset





Mentor Mindset & Characteristics

- Adaptable
- Authentic
- Dedicated
- Encouraging
- Fair
- Open-minded
- Patient
- Positive
- Reliable





Applying the Mentor Mindset

- Minimize our defensiveness
- Demonstrate our vulnerability, curiosity, and humility
- Stretch our worldviews
- Identify our bias and expectations
- Allow for personal growth



Diagram of a Student





Using Our Emotional Intelligence

Self-Awareness: be honest about your strengths and weaknesses; be aware of your own feelings and bias

Self-Regulation: be aware of your feelings while not letting them take control of your decisions

Motivation: be up for a challenge; focus on long term success

Empathy: be aware of others' feelings and viewpoints; be slow to judge

Social Skills: be a team player; being a good listener; strive to defuse disputes



Kids don't care about how much you
know until they know how much you care



Being a True2U Mentor





Facilitation & Engagement

- Be on time (plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early)
- Know your stuff & be confident
- Be creative & encourage participation
- Authenticity & consistency are key
- Try to remember scholars' names
- Foster an environment of trust
- Equality for all
- Show excitement & be positive



Review Tips in Curriculum Guide





Classroom Management

- Listen, Acknowledge & Repeat
- Use proximity
- Choose your battles
- Be mindful of transition time
- On your feet, not in your seat
 - Stay engaged when your partner is facilitating
 - Avoid cell phone use
- Set the example





Mentor Responsibilities

- Time commitment – approx. four hours each month
 - 2 hour sessions
 - 1 hour training
 - Additional preparation
- Pre-work prior to each session
 - communicate with mentor partner to prepare for each session (if applicable)
 - complete tasks prior to meeting with scholars
 - attend curriculum trainings (optional)
- Complete mentor feedback survey





Session Prep -Work

- Check your email
- Review the session curriculum
- Complete all pre-work (surveys, posters, etc.)
- Connect and prepare with mentor partner
- Develop talking points/ personal examples
- Update session PowerPoints
- Attend Curriculum Training Sessions the week before the session
 - 6 pm Tuesday (in person at NLI)
 - 12 pm Thursday (virtual via Zoom webinar)
 - Recording available on Mentor Materials webpage on Fridays



Mentor Guidelines

- No sharing of contact or social media info
- No photos of scholars or sessions
- No contact with scholars outside of program sessions
- If you feel that a scholar needs more support than you are able to provide during your session:
 - Discuss with teacher privately
 - Contact program staff for follow up





Mentor Supports

- Detailed Curriculum Guides
- Mentor/ Teacher Meet & Greet
- Mentor Trainings
 - Welcome to True2U!
 - Curriculum Trainings
- Mentor Materials Webpage
- True2U staff to answer questions and provide support





Mentor Materials Webpage





Communicate

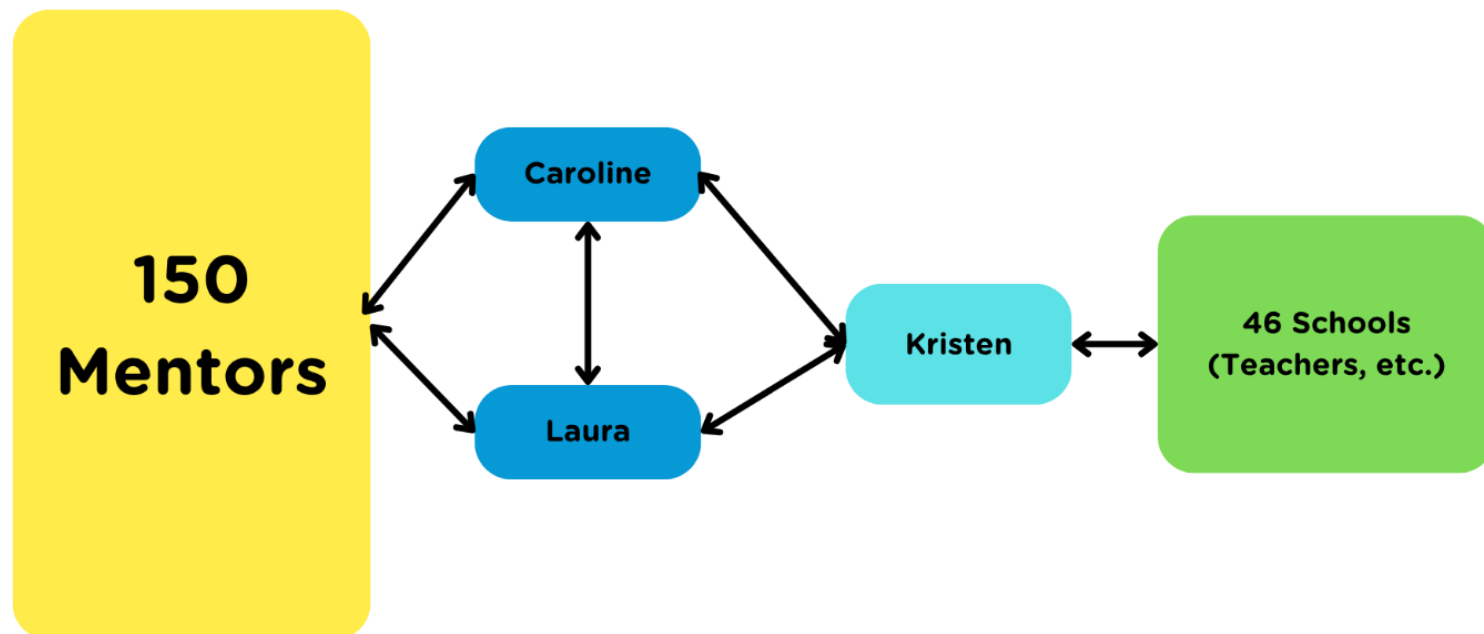
Keep us informed

- Your schedule
 - Any conflicts, last minute emergencies, running late, etc.
 - Notify mentor partner if applicable, True2U staff, school/teacher.
- Challenges
- Triumphs
- Feedback
- How we can better support you





Chain of Communication





Pre Program Checklist

- ✓ ☐ Attend Welcome to True2U! Orientation
- ☐ Complete CMSD background check
 - New mentors and returning that require renewal
- ☐ Mark your calendars with session important dates
- ☐ Mentor/Teacher Meet & Greet on Oct. 13th - 16th (day/time according to your school assignment)
- ☐ Connect with mentor partner



Mentor/Teacher Meet & Greet

Tuesday, October 13th - Friday, Oct. 16th

- This is the opportunity to meet your assigned teacher prior to Session 1
- Familiarize yourself with the school, parking, protocols, and staff
- Meet your mentor partner if applicable.
- Ask Questions:
 - How does the teacher handle challenges in the classroom?
 - What tools do they use to bring the scholars attention back in?
- Date and time dependent on school assignment or if notified otherwise.
- Do they use technology (Clever Touch)?



Primary Contact for Mentors

Laura Huffman

Program Manager, True2U

Neighborhood Leadership Institute

laura@neighborhoodleadership.org

Office: 216-658-1351

Text reminders sent from Levitate: 216-243-2903





neighborhood leadership
INSTITUTE

ALL STAR

Appreciation

HONORING THE DEDICATION.
CELEBRATING THE IMPACT.

★ CELEBRATING OUR NLI PROGRAMS ★

- ★ NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP CLEVELAND (NLC)
- ★ NLI HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
- ★ YOUTH LEADERSHIP CLEVELAND (YLC)
- ★ TRUE2U MENTORING PROGRAM
- ★ SUMMER TENNIS
- ★ SCHOOLS AS NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES (SNR)

Join us as we recognize and celebrate the incredible staff, coaches, volunteers, and partners who make our programs possible every day.

We appreciate you! ♥

⇒ *Let's Celebrate!* ⇐

NOVEMBER 6, 2026

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

5246 BROADWAY AVENUE
CLEVELAND, OH 44127

THANK YOU FOR BEING
OUR ALL STARS!



TONY STALLWORTH

Manager of Community
Engagement and Education

216.658.1363





Thank you!

Enjoy your True2U journey!

