

# Faces Of New Bedford #64 – Rayana Grace

Meet Rayana Grace, 24-year-old Youth Development Director at the YMCA.



Rayana, who has lived in the city her entire life, couldn't imagine living and working anywhere else. After graduating from Boston College with a degree in Sociology and African/African-Diaspora studies, she had friends who took their skills and talents elsewhere, as she followed after her intuition to return home and seek employment.

Realizing the importance of giving back to the city that helped raise her she started working as a case manager at the Harbour House. The Harbour House caters to homeless families that are trying to get back on their feet, providing them with a place to live and a case manager, who can help plug them into the services offered in the city. She enjoyed this job, as it opened her eyes to the difficulties that others face in the city and gave her compassion to be able to do her best to help them.

After her time with Harbor House, she started working for the YMCA as the Youth Development Director, which was a position that hadn't been held for 8 years prior to her employment

there. With the Y, Rayana is able to create and maintain programs for the children who attend the downtown location. She has helped establish a drama club, dancing classes, and a plethora of other services during her time there.

Her hopes are to be able to empower the children to recognize that anything that they are looking for outside of themselves is already within them. So if they are looking for love or strength or faith, those are already gifts within them.

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*Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to [colton@coltonsimmons.com](mailto:colton@coltonsimmons.com)*

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