



Becoming

YOUTH INVESTIGATORS

2024 REPORT

YOUTH INVESTIGATORS SUMMIT NEWSLETTER

PRYDE | JUNE 2024

BIG THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THE 2024 YOUTH INVESTIGATORS PROGRAM AND THE YOUTH INVESTIGATORS IN ACTION SUMMIT A HIT:

- **Kristin Ruggiero from Rockland County 4-H, who has been with us from the start and helped kick this whole thing off!**
- **The team behind New York State 4-H Career Explorations like Alexa Maille, for always including PRYDE in this phenomenal event.**
- **Sophie Brown, Gary Fine, and the crew at Durland Alternatives Library for hosting us.**
- **Our rockstar summer interns: Justus Jenkins (Brooks School of Public Policy '25), Ayushi Kapoor (Brooks School of Public Policy '25), and Lucas Li (Arts & Sciences '26)**
- **North Rockland Central School District for always backing the teens. Special shoutout to Dr. Michael Gill for his yearly support.**
- **All the Cornell students and staff who shared their stories and wisdom with the Youth Investigators.**
- **Esther Kim, our former PRYDE Program Coordinator, who helped create the awesome curriculum.**
- **And, last but not least, Rebecca Morgan for making this program possible with her generous support.**

MEET THE 2024 YOUTH INVESTIGATORS



So, what is Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)? It's where teens and adults team up to research and tackle issues that matter to them. You are not just learning about your world – you are changing it!

For the second year in a row, we linked up with Kristin Ruggiero and brought 20 awesome rising tenth graders (you!) into the Youth Investigators Program at North Rockland High School. Over 10 weeks, you learned the ropes of social science research, from asking the right questions to sharing what you found out.

Then, in June, 14 of you superstars came to Cornell to show off your new skills at the Youth Investigators in Action Summit. You dove deep into how social identities impact college and career pathways – and what we can do to change them.



What Went Down!

Day 1: Welcome to Cornell!

We kicked things off by chatting about social identity, social justice, and the possibilities of using YPAR for social change. Then, you guys hit the books (and the Excel sheets) for a data scavenger hunt at Mann Library. You found out how race, gender, and other identities shape the paths that people take after high school. We narrowed in on one question: How do social identities impact pathways to college and career? And just like that, you were off on a mission to find the answer!



Day 2: MIC ON! Interview Mode

The second day was all about action! You prepped hard and then went out to interview Cornell students and recent grads. You asked layered questions about race, class, and what it takes to get into and through college. After lunch, you guys got in touch with the artsy side of research: a photovoice project – using pictures to capture what Cornell’s campus says (and does *not* say) about diversity and inclusion.

You noticed a ton – from the all-white portraits in fancy halls, to gender-neutral restrooms that aren’t so common back home. By the end of the day, you guys were already thinking about how to make your school and communities more inclusive.



Day 3: Show Time!

On the final day, you were on a mission: turn all of your hard work into a presentation. You broke into groups to pull together your data and findings. Afterward, you brainstormed different ways to support diversity, equity and inclusion within Cornell and North Rockland.

You presented to Cornell faculty and staff, sharing your insights and answering questions from attendees. Later, Chaniya Santiago and David Fyffe stepped up at the 4-H Career Explorations closing ceremony, confidently recapping everything you guys had learned and accomplished.

What's Recommended

1

Fix the Elevator Issue / Build Gender-Neutral Bathrooms:

You highlighted a significant problem with the school's elevator, which does not easily reach all floors. You believe that this needs to be addressed – to ensure everyone can move around the school swiftly and comfortably. In addition to this, you folks identified a lack of gender neutral bathrooms on the North Rockland campus – which might negatively affect your trans or non-binary classmates.

2

Gather Feedback from Peers: To strengthen your case for better elevators and gender-neutral bathrooms, you could talk to other students. You could use surveys or brief interviews to see if others are facing the same challenges.

3

Amplify Your Voices: You guys understand the power of collective action. As one Investigator put it, "If enough people complain, they'll have to do something." You are capable of rallying your peers and bringing attention to these issues – and creating real change in your school community.

What Youth Investigators Achieved

The photovoice activity was a win-win, "letting students explore the campus while diving into our research," one investigator explained

"The photovoice activity really opened my eyes to issues in our own community," several Investigators shared when asked what they learned from the program.

"Absolutely, I would recommend this program to my friends," one of the Investigators shared enthusiastically when asked about their experience.





Round of Applause for the Youth Investigators



We could not be prouder of the 2024 Youth Investigators! Your dedication, curiosity, and hard work have truly shone through. You dove into complex issues, asked tough questions, and came up with insightful recommendations to make your communities better.

Keep the Momentum Going!

If you have been inspired by this experience and wish to dig deeper or take on a community organizing project, we are here to assist you. Do not hesitate to reach out to us - we would love to work with you again and support your journey to make a difference!

We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to work with you all- sharp, bright, and curious teen researchers. We would love to stay in touch!

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