



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Inquiries: 718.288.2402 pr@islandvoice.org

<http://www.islandvoice.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/IslandVoice/>

10th Annual Island Voice Youth Empowerment Summit! (Celebrating 10 Years of Youth Empowerment)

Staten Island, NY – The 10th Annual Island Voice Youth Empowerment Summit will be held on Saturday, September 27th from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Wagner College, 1 Campus Road, Staten Island, at Spiro Hall. This is a free event open to the public. Lunch will be provided for all participating teens. Highlights can be found on the Island Voice website and Facebook.com/IslandVoice. For more information or to register a teen for tickets online: VYS10.Eventbrite.com, email: pr@islandvoice.org

This year's teen summit will be the biggest ever, building upon the success of previous years, expanding upon community partnerships, and celebrating past and current honorees. Founded by Bobby Digi, the Youth Empowerment Summit was created to give young people an opportunity to have a voice on issues that impact them the most while connecting them with their peers. It also places attendees in contact with community leaders, PAL and organizations who are able to provide valuable information on careers, education, internships, healthy relationships, and college readiness

According to Bobby Digi, "I am simply proud to see how the Youth Empowerment Summit has grown in leaps and bounds over the last ten years, attracting more teens each year who want to begin to plan for their future and make important decisions about their education and career path. It is inspiring to see them light up when they make these valuable connections and I am even more excited when teens return and let us know how this teen summit has changed their lives."

Special guest **Ralph McDaniels** of Video Music Box will conduct a special production for teens on gun violence and conflict resolution in partnership with the New York City Council's *Art a Catalyst for Change* initiative. Sundog Theater is participating in collaboration with Curtis High School and Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical High School; both schools have begun a year-long program to utilize theater to prevent gun violence.

This year's "Know Your History: The Golden Image Award" Honorees Include: Political Strategist, **Caesar Vargas**; Executive Director, Staten Island Foundation, **Betsy Dubovsky**; Executive Director of the Staten Island Community Job Center, **Gonzalo Mercado**; Hot 97 On Air

Personality, **DJ Stacks**; Island Voice Youth Advocate, **Sheresse Mullings**; **Brianna Fugate** Teen Tech Advocate and Innovator, Miss Staten Island Outstanding Teen, **Charista Mroczek**; Teen Actor, **Michael Rainey Jr.**; Founder, Holy Moe Basketball Classic, **Moses Dayee**; New York State Senator **Diane Savino**.

“I'm humbled and thrilled to be recognized by Island Voice. As a local title holder for the Miss America Organization, my Miss Staten Island Teen 2016 crown gives me a voice to advocate increasing the number of bone marrow donors for children and minorities.” -Charista Mroczek

Teens will be greeted with an all day expo of information provided by over thirty organizations including the New York City Department of Youth and Community Services, City University of New York, Wagner College, St. John's University, and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, to name a few. Panels and workshops will be provided throughout the day in addition to performances and “Know Your History: The Golden Image Awards Ceremony” with a special proclamation from New York City Council Member Debi Rose, celebrating 10 years of the **Island Voice Youth Empowerment Teen Summit**. **Special thanks to Wagner college for the past 9years and St. George theaters for year#1**

###

MISSION

Island Voice's mission is to inspire and cultivate the next generation of creative, community, civic, and political leaders to meet, create, act, and serve. Through educational, cultural, athletic, and service-focused annual events and programs, Island Voice brings together the diverse communities of Staten Island and beyond for a dynamic exchange of ideas and solutions.

HISTORY

Island Voice was founded in 2006 by Bobby Digi and three additional founding board members as a grassroots community and youth development organization focused on supporting and giving voice to the African and New immigrants, African American, and Caribbean American communities of Staten Island. The founding members recognized that there was not only a huge void in programming and services for this underserved community but there was also no central space in Staten Island where the diverse communities of the Borough could come together to share different cultural perspectives and ideas. Their innovative vision and drive had a base in wanting to contribute to the quality of life and economic vitality on the North Shore of Staten Island. This turned out to be a foundation for mobilizing the public and attracting nonprofit and private sector buy-in through partnerships that were built with support from arts, business and cultural leaders across all levels of local government.

For ten years, Island Voice has been the premier organization in Staten Island focused on youth empowerment, cultural awareness, and economic empowerment. Its programming, events, and initiatives are all aligned with these three pillars of the organization. Island Voice is uniquely prepared to service its audience because of its deep reach into the communities of the North Shore and its inroads with important partnerships with mission-aligned nonprofits; whether it is empowering youth through leadership and financial literacy training, educational programming, advocating for cultural awareness in trying to address language barriers related to school requirements, or organizing police and community relationship-building engagement. In response to growing community needs, the

organization was restructured in 2016 and formally opened the doors to CANVAS, located at 150 Victory Blvd, SI, NY, 10301; creating a permanent space for exhibitions and programming.