

YOUTH POWER! REGIONAL YOUTH PARTNERS

Regional Youth Partners (RYP) help to increase youth voice on all levels of youth services. They also connect and support local youth led groups and host regional gatherings. They are field organizers working to make our New York State youth movement stronger.

WESTERN: *Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates*



Jessica Hollins

Phone: 585-314-2452

Email: Jhollins@youthpowerny.org

Jessica was a youth that had spent time in the juvenile justice and mental health systems and was also a teen mom. Jessica has since been involved with bringing awareness to the community about the rapid growth of teen pregnancy. She has also interned with the Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) and spent time speaking with young people about what they felt was needed for them in their community so that they would not return to placements. Jessica has a lifelong goal on one day eliminating the use of physical restraint and as an RYP she will continue to push for change within each system.

NEW YORK CITY: *Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond*



Desiree Moore

Phone: 347-880-2735

Email: Dmoore@youthpowerny.org

Desiree Moore is new to the NYC Region, but no stranger to the youth and young adult movement. Her passion for cross-systems advocacy stems from overcoming personal adversity, including battling with depression, rejection, and abandonment as a young person in the foster care and disability systems. In 2009, YP! helped her discover her voice and boldness to take action through becoming involved in the YP! working groups. Then, in 2010, Desiree became an employee of YP! as the Long Island Regional Youth Partner. Awarded for her work in 2013 by the White House as a Champion of Change, she was honored for being an ordinary person doing extraordinary things in her region. In July 2014, Desiree resigned with YP! to travel the west coast to work on an Anti-Bullying Campaign. Traveling and meeting young people renewed her love for advocacy. Her goal is to bring love, grace, and restoration back into the child serving system where it belongs. Desiree is excited to increase and unify youth voice and peer support in NYC.

CENTRAL: *Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, Saint Lawrence*



Katie Rushlo

Phone: 315-679-1476

Email: Krushlo@youthpowerny.org

Katie is from Syracuse and has a decade of experience in Youth Advocacy. At 14 years old Katie and her two younger siblings were placed into foster care. Katie was introduced to the regional youth leadership team Youth In Progress (YIP) and was eager to help better the foster care system, for all youth going through similar situations. Katie suffered from depression, OCD, and anxiety due to her foster care placement and separation from her siblings; however, Katie overcame those issues and was then able to turn those feelings into a passion for change. Katie participated in coalitions such as: clothing vouchers for youth in care and siblings visits. She also was employed as a Youth Ambassador where she educated At-Risk Youth about higher education. She aged out of Foster Care at age 21, where she discovered the difficulty of being an adult after care. She is eager to seek change for the aging out process and discovering services for after-care. Katie earned a Bachelor's degree in Forensic Psychology from Walden University in 2013. As the Central Regional Youth Partner, Katie will make sure that youth voices are heard and will continue to push for change in the concerned areas of her region.

HUDSON RIVER: Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Westchester



Domonica Jeffress

Phone: 518-322-2096

Email: djeffress@youthpowerny.org

Domonica Jeffress has a passion for eliminating the labeling of young people and improving the welfare system. Domonica spent most of her life in foster care, where she faced many adversities that helped her see the importance and necessity of youth voice in all child serving systems. While in foster care Domonica was involved in projects that coupled her personal experience with the lack of choice and voice to draw attention to why youth voice and participation in their service plans was a practice that needed to become widespread. Two of these projects were videos headed by the New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children. One featured young people in foster care regarding their court proceeding and the other was a video on leaving foster care and the importance of having an active role in the aging out process. Domonica has touched many systems and advocates for a better tomorrow for all youth. Domonica is a graduate of the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York where she received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a minor Public Health.

LONG ISLAND: Nassau, Suffolk



Alex Frisina

Phone: 631-245-5289

Email: Afrisina@youthpowerny.org

Alexander is a hardworking and dedicated young professional that was labeled with Special Education needs at an early age. Adopted at a young age by a family located in Eastern Long Island, Alex is the youngest of four siblings, and the only adopted member of his family. Facing issues of self-identity Alex struggled with depression. Throughout the decision making process of his treatment he felt voiceless and was made to believe he had no choices. This feeling pushed Alex to seek alternative methods of expression; which lead him down the road of creative writing. Alex used his writing to not only express himself but also escape from the feeling of being powerless and unheard. Since graduating from King's College located in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Alex has been seeking a position that uses his creative background to help make a difference. Learning about the work YOUTH POWER! has done and the goals they are working towards Alex realized his past experience could be used to help others dealing with similar situations. Pulling from past experiences and gaining knowledge every day Alex hopes to push for change and spread the work of YOUTH POWER!



YOUTH POWER!

737 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY 12208 • info@youthpowerny.org

Toll Free: 888-326-8644 • Phone: 518-432-0333

www.YOUTHPOWERNY.org

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