

Using Youth Voices

A newsletter based on a Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration Innovation Grant, *Using Youth Voices to Transform New York State 4-H into a Nationally Recognized Antiracist Organization*

December 2021

Introducing our guest columnist

This issue of *Using Youth Voices* features Tyler Dread as guest columnist for *In Their Own Words*.

Tyler was a member of the 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) at Tapestry Charter High School, graduating earlier this year. Tyler has taken on countless roles to support his club, his community and the NYS 4-H Program as a whole. He helped coordinate a homelessness awareness event and a community police speak-out. He was a roundtable discussion leader at STARR, NYS 4-H's youth leadership retreat, and he was the lead actor in Youth CAN's "Conversations on Black Lives Matter" YouTube video series; see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mphEWSwLiHs>

He also represented NYS 4-H at the National 4-H True Leaders in Equity Institute, 2020-2021. Today, Tyler is a freshman at SUNY Brockport, majoring in theater.

We hope you enjoy reading Tyler's *In Their Own Words* and glean some ideas about what NYS 4-H needs to do to transform 4-H into a welcoming, nurturing and nationally respected antiracist organization.

We're looking for future guest columnists to share what they believe needs to be done to improve 4-H. Please let one of the *Using Youth Voices* project team know if you would like to recommend a young person as our next *In Their Own Words* columnist!

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In Their Own Words

Tyler Dread, Guest Columnist



Where would I be without my involvement in 4-H? What would my high school career look like if I hadn't been pushed into joining 4-H Youth CAN?

When I think of 4-H, I think about how glad I am to be a part of it because it truly has changed me for the better and helped make me the person I am today. I've made so many memories, made so many new friends, so many connections, gone on fun trips, worked several summer jobs, held an event where the community got to have real conversations with police—and even have been pushed into conquering my fear of public speaking and leading a team.

4-H has given me so many opportunities. The experiences that I've had in 4-H have opened up so many doors for me. All of the college visits wouldn't have been done without 4-H and the summer job/internships to sharpen your skills or peak your interests in different careers wouldn't have been possible for me without 4-H. Most importantly, I got to help my community and give back to my community numerous times through our 4-H community improvement projects.

4-H is a great organization that brings people together and has been doing that for years now. In my opinion, 4-H's inclusivity is just fine. Yes, it could always be improved just like everything else in the world, but I've seen 4-H working for people of all colors and backgrounds. If 4-H stays on this path and continues to move forward, then it will all be fine.

I can suggest, however, a way to get more youth of color to join would be to go in more schools and offer up everything that our 4-H Youth CAN club offered—with things like summer job, college campus tours and trips. The summer job especially is essential because we all want to make money but we want to make the money where we can feel happy and also gain new skills—and not just work at a fast food restaurant. Tell young people who don't know about 4-H, that they will make a difference for the betterment of their community and the world around them. Another good way to get more youth to join 4-H clubs is to find ways to offer free drinks and snacks to hook them in! Once they're on board, you'll have more dedicated young people that are willing to help, to show up and have their minds broadened. More kids of color will show up to the 4-H events and it will be a more diverse crowd of young minds coming together.

I also think that NYS 4-H should work on becoming more diverse. NYS 4-H clubs need to be accessible to everyone—so that others can reap the benefits of learning how to bring prominent issues to the community's attention. I think this will help all young people build the life skills that will benefit them in the future—just like what I've learned through 4-H is benefitting me!

Resources, research & more!



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: IMPORTANT SPACES FOR EMOTIONAL LEARNING OF TEENS

Thursday, January 20, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Presented by Temescal Associates and the How Kids Learn Foundation. In this webinar, Drs. Reed Larson and Natalie Rusk, will highlight key elements of youth programs that form the context for young people's active engagement in emotional learning. They will present examples from their research on how program staff can facilitate youth development skills to manage and use emotions. A panel of expert afterschool practitioners will respond to their presentation and speak to the relevancy of this research to those who focus on youth of color, the needs of girls, and preparing youth for the workforce. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/afterschool-programs-important-spaces-for-emotional-learning-of-teens-tickets-216511420487>



CONVERSATIONS ON BLACK LIVES MATTER: A 4-H YOUTH PROJECT

Check out this series of short video skits created by the CCE Erie County 4-H Program, featuring Tyler Dread, this issue of *Using Youth Voices* guest columnist, *In Their Own Words*.

"Discussing All Lives Matter" is a short skit about two people disagreeing about the statement Black Lives matter in comparison to "all lives matter." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mphEWSwLiHs>

In "Black Lives Matter Shouldn't Exist," two people, portrayed by Sara Jablonski, CCE Erie Urban 4-H Youth Development Educator and Tyler Dread, have a discussion about violence in the black community and violence from the police. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsCclHGIGkM>



About Using Youth Voices

The objective of the *Using Youth Voices* project is to create a series of mechanisms to give youth a vehicle for sharing their ideas for transforming NYS 4-H into an antiracist organization.

These are the mechanisms being used:

- **In Their Own Words:** Youth will be invited to be guest columnists in e-newsletters to share their ideas.
- **Where Are They Now?:** interviews with 4-H alumni will be conducted to give these young people an opportunity to reflect on what helped them most to be successful in 4-H and what recommendations they have for transforming 4-H into an inclusive organization for all youth.
- **Youth Voice:** A series of podcasts featuring interviews with 4-H alumni, current 4-H'ers and community members to share what they believe is needed to happen to transform 4-H into a respected antiracist organization.

All suggestions will be culled from these efforts to identify how to create a transformative antiracist NYS 4-H organization.

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