

YORK COUNTY "G20" GROUP CREATES COUNTY-WIDE YOUTH COUNCIL

York County Students help Create a Voice for their Peers

Issue/Need

Perhaps now more than ever, York County's youth are in need of support, connection, and a sense of belonging. To address this need, the Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN) and Partners for Healthier Communities partnered with three York County students on a summer initiative program called Gateway to Opportunity "G20". The program is aimed at supporting youth in developing numerous different professional and interpersonal skills and centers around a youth led project addressing community needs such as mental health concerns, substance use disorder etc.

Intervention

With Maine's most recent data from 2019's Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) reflecting 23% of Maine High Schoolers being bullied, 29% currently using e-cigarettes, and a staggering 32% feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the last year, the G20 team sprang into action to address these needs. With the support and supervision of PHC staff, the all-youth group began to consider how they could help their fellow peers have a voice to address both these and other needs within the community. The answer? A county-wide youth council they appropriately named YC2, an initialism for York County Youth Council.

Pictured below (from left to right): Dylan, Sreylen, and Lilly founders of YC2.



"I want to help the community as much as I can and thought that the project of creating a youth council for York County was a really good and fun idea. I've always cared about social issues since I was little and have always wanted more of a voice and influence."

- Dylan, Kennebunk High Junior

Results

By the time the 2021-2022 school year began, Lilly, Sreylen, and Dylan had successfully created an entire website, an instagram account, and a 30+ page manual outlining their youth council's goals, mission, recruitment process, meeting procedures and more! They also posted flyers throughout the community containing QR codes to help spread the word. Users are able to scan these codes using a smartphone or tablet and are brought directly to the council's website and contact information. Their goal is to form a council of 20-30 students from each school within the county to work as a "driving force of awareness and advocacy in Southern Maine" through "youth involvement and perspective."

Sustainability

As the school year progresses on, the council will continue to work on their recruitment process and plan for events and other projects aimed at supporting York County and more specifically its youth. In the meantime, stay up to date with YC2 by checking them out on instagram, tiktok, and more using the handles and QR code below.



@yorkcountyyyc2021

TikTok: Yorkcountyyyc



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