



Action Plans for Success August 20, 2018

The Sustainable Holyoke Youth Leadership Initiative held its **End of Summer/Back-To-School Gathering** with Holyoke youth at the Fiesta Cafe. Everyone was excited and happy to share their insights and progress since the Youth Leadership Summit in June!

Youth kept drawing focus back to the Summit. Being on a college campus for the week inspired them to think about their futures. The feedback ranged from, **“super cool”, “feeling very professional”** to **“a totally different atmosphere”**.

It was great to have the Summit Faculty join us including Pamela Ray, Martha's Vineyard and Namgyal Gyaltshen, recent Brown University graduate from Bhutan. Future physician and college junior Taynara Goncalves joined via skype to celebrate their successes and offer support for upcoming SHYLI's College Prep & Field Trip Program. In advance of the meeting Summit Project Co-Director Kutasha Silva worked with Holyoke youth.

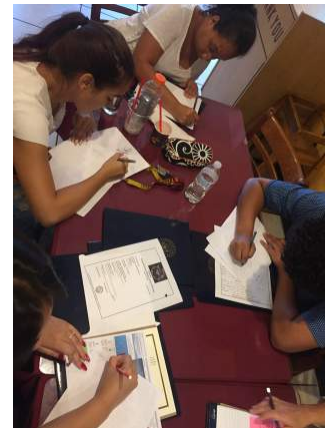
Johana Muise shared that the Summit had helped broaden her perspective. **“I’ve always been good at looking up things but I hadn’t thought about research as a career until The Summit”**. This was something that the youth repeatedly brought up.

When The Institute's Executive Director **Marianne Larned** referred to the Summit as **“planting a seed that starts to grow”**, there were vigorous nods and agreements around the table.



Youth took time to review and reflect on their **Action Plans** from the Summit. These professional development worksheets help youth envision their future - for the 6 months to 5 years. They help them track their goals and their progress made during the Summit. **Sky Gonzalez** reiterated the importance of having these plans, **“It prepares us to think ahead”**.

Felicity Ortiz has been busy this summer, starting her babysitting business. As she pursues her dream of becoming a chef, she decided to apply for a dual enrollment with Holyoke High School and Holyoke Community College - so she can participate in the new Culinary Program.



The Action Plan session helped think about internships and other job opportunities that could open-up. **Alexis Diaz** enjoyed his summer job working at Career Point. When youth asked about internships, Alexis took the lead, answering questions and emphasizing their importance on resumes. He pointed out that the high school often lacked such resources. He was proud of doing everything he could to counsel and guide others.

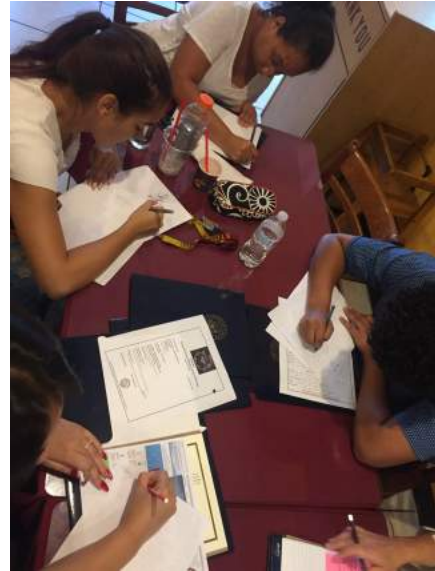


Holyoke youth were happy to hear how the Rhode Island youth delegates were actively involved. **Lya Perez** was very inspired by attending U.S. Senator Whitehouse's Environmental Leadership Conference. She wants to encourage other youth to get involved in sustainability. She is volunteering at different organizations and writing about her experience for the Institute's new website: Sustainability is Fun! Hearing this, the Holyoke youth delegates were inspired. They are interested in learning more about sustainability organizations in Holyoke. They will volunteer at different organizations and were about their experiences. Everyone explored ideas like how **Felicity Ortiz** might like to check out *Nuestro Raices* farms. **Johana Muise** was excited to explore more, using her newly discovered research skills. **Sky Gonzalez** was eager to work with different organizations noting that starting something new was a lot more complicated. **"You can learn so much more by joining organizations."**



Youth enjoyed picking out their leadership cards. Going around the circle, they chose: Compassion, Vision, Resilience, Risk. Everyone agreed that their

words would help guide them during the coming weeks ahead. **"My day doesn't feel complete if I don't do it,"** said Sky. **"It's become a routine. It just puts me in a good space."**



The gathering ended reflecting on why Sustainable Holyoke Youth Leadership was so important to them.

SHYLI has broadened my views for looking for a job. Before SHYLI, I never realized how many opportunities there were in the job field, especially when it comes to education. In school, they often put us in boxes and small categories instead of allowing us to be individuals. **Sky Gonzalez**

SHYLI is important to me because it helped me think more about my future and career. I've realized that it is very important to write down my dreams and goals to make sure I commit to them and believe in them. **Alexis Diaz**

SHYLI gave me the chance to experience different things and meet different people. Being in this program, I've become stronger and more confident, especially when speaking in public. **Felicity Ortiz**

SHYLI is important to me because it actually has a meaning to it and it's actually trying to make a difference in Holyoke which is what I'd really like to see. At the Summit I learned a lot. SHYLI has also opened up a bunch of opportunities that I've never thought possible. **Johana Muise**



Sustainable Holyoke Youth Leadership Initiative www.shyli.co