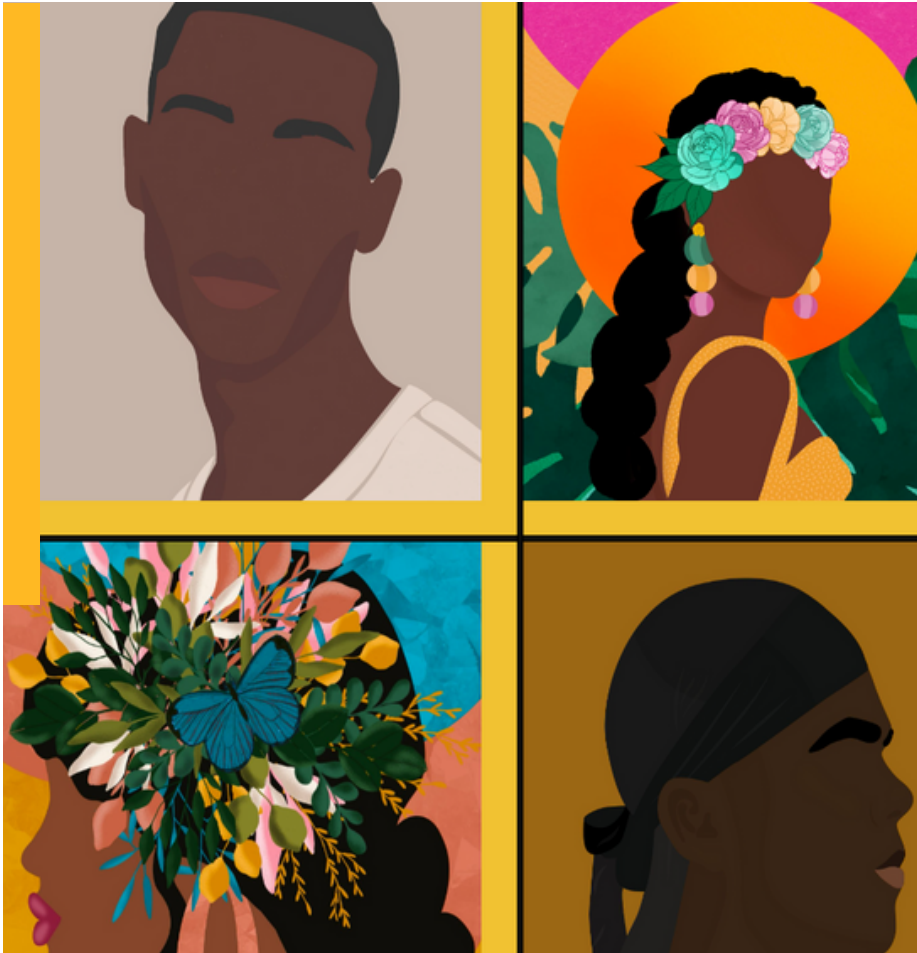


AUGUST 2023

EDITION 2

NEWSLETTER

REIMAGINE BLACK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



BLACK-CENTERED. YOUTH-LED. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN.

By Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth

In 2019, the Black Caucus released a [report](#) on the alarming increase in suicide rates for Black children and teenagers over the past generation. In response to this and the continued impact of racism on mental health, the [Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth](#), in partnership with the [Minnesota Department of Health](#), is facilitating the Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health Initiative. This is a 3-year initiative, with the communities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center to confront harm, pursue healing, and center Black youth health and wellbeing.

Newsletter Highlights

Youth Leadership in
Youth Space

Family Sunday
Funday at
CheapSkate

Reimagine Black
Youth Mental
Health Black Joy
Retreat

Upcoming
Opportunities

AUGUST 2023

CATCHING UP

The Team



Youth Leadership in Youth Space

Youth Space is a Black youth affinity space which is one of the many elements of this initiative. The past couple sessions have taken on a new exciting format as the space has been youth led! Lee'Ray facilitated two sessions recently. One on Poetry and one on Black Connectivity. These dynamic workshops have illustrated the importance of establishing strong connections within the Black Community and beyond, as well as leveraging personal networks to drive positive change. One of the themes that has been emerging this summer is the important role of storytelling in relation to Black Joy. Through interactive activities, participants had the opportunity to develop storytelling skills and learn how to share their experiences in compelling and impactful manner. Although his summer internship is over we want to thank Lee'Ray for his contributions and impact as a role model .

THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER INTERNS!

Our Brooklynk Interns have been instrumental in the movement of our work this summer. We are grateful for the depth of their thinking, the power of their presence, and the impact of their contributions. When asked what they have gained from this experience, they said:

"I've really gone out of my comfort zone during this internship...Connecting with Black people across my community helped me feel a sense of 'family'... I'm most proud of the youth I have my food justice presentation to. The way they were engaging and conversing during my presentation was phenomenal. Seeing kids be so knowledgeable about the systems that have been hurting our community forever was powerful. It gave me hope knowing that there are youth who care and want to learn more about these issues." - Erica

"I gained experience in things like meetings and I got to see the behind the scenes of different projects and events. I also gained relationships with other Black people that I wouldn't have without this internship. I'm most proud of the work we put in as a team to make things happen. The roller skating event, the camping retreat, and youth space where Black youth can go and be themselves without worrying about being judged for being Black." - Gabby



Rachel Warren,
Initiative
Coordinator



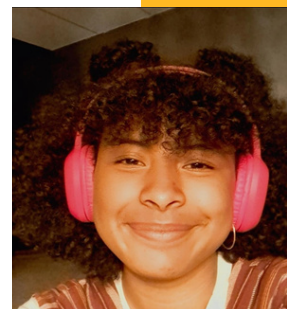
Hilda Davis,
MSW/Public Health
Intern



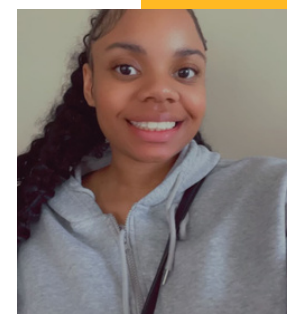
Layne Benton,
BBAY Youth
Outreach and
Engagement
Specialist



Lee'RayVone
Gibson,
Psychology/
Critical Race and
Ethnicity Studies
Intern



Erica Lee,
Brooklynk Intern



Gabrielle Drayton,
Brooklynk Intern

AUGUST 2023

SUNDAY FUNDAY ROLLERSKATING EVENT

Our recent roller skating event, which was initiated by our Black young people, proved to be an exciting and vibrant gathering that celebrated both well-being and community connection. With fresh faces joining us, the event embodied the power of youthful leadership in shaping meaningful experiences that unite recreation and wellness. We look forward to future gatherings that prioritize mental wellness while harnessing the enthusiasm and creativity of our young leaders.



BLACK JOY RETREAT AT ST. CROIX STATE PARK

Set against the picturesque backdrop of St. Croix State Park, the Black Joy Retreat was a transformative and rejuvenating experience designed to celebrate and amplify Black Joy, while also addressing important themes of community, mental health, and empowerment. This retreat, envisioned by youth leaders weaves together vital discussion and celebration of community, culture and self care. From engaging workshops on food justice and mental wellness to expressive activities, kayaking, yoga and archery to name a few; every moment fostered connections and inspired personal growth. In the presence of new faces and familiar friends our retreat captured the essence of Black joy and offered a space to embrace authenticity and cultivate resilience. We hope you join us in the future as we create lasting memories.



UP NEXT!

**YOUTH SPACE AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MERGE MEETING
- WE WILL PLAN OUR FALL SUMMIT COLLECTIVELY!**

**I-1 CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS - WE ARE STILL IN THE
PROCESS OF CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS FOR OUR BLACK
JOY PROJECT! IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS
CONNECTED TO THE BROOKLYNS AND IS WILLING TO SHARE
THEIR EXPERIENCES OF BLACK JOY, PLEASE LET US KNOW!**

BLACK JOY
PROJECT

**1-1 CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS
AND PHOTOVOICE PROJECTS**



**BLACK YOUTH SPACE HAPPENS
EVERY OTHER THURSDAY!
4:30PM-6:30PM
CONTACT US FOR DETAILS!**

For more information or to get involved, contact our Initiative Coordinator, Rachel Warren at the following:

Phone: 763-234-5814

Email: Rachel.Warren@brooklynsallianceforyouth.org

Visit website for more information:

<https://www.brooklynsallianceforyouth.org/black-youth-mental-health>