



October 31, 2022

Contact:

Alejandra Lopez

ALopez@legal-aid.org

917-294-9348

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid and Red Hook Initiative Launch Inaugural Know Your Rights Ambassador Training Series

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** and **Red Hook Initiative (RHI)** announced the inaugural 2022 Know Your Rights Ambassador Training Series, which will educate students about the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) gang database, police encounters and youth organizing. Upon completion of the training, participants become youth ambassadors who will continue to facilitate Know Your Rights workshops around these critical topics.

Specifically, the 12-week training curriculum will focus on the rights that New Yorkers have to protect themselves from illegal police searches and other acts of misconduct. Attendees will learn about the NYPD's gang raid tactics, and ways to fight the Department's overinclusive gang labeling. Youth ambassadors will also learn how to become skillful and knowledgeable presenters to conduct workshops around this issue with their peers.

"We see firsthand how the NYPD employs illegal and unethical tactics to target our clients, fueling the carceral system that has long preyed on communities of color," said **Anthony Posada, supervising attorney in the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "It is critical that we build awareness and expand education efforts to provide the tools to youth to not only advocate for themselves about these harmful policing tactics, but to pass that knowledge forward and edify future generations."

"This program has been good because I learned more about cops and NYPD's systems and other things they may do to target Black and Brown people. This is important information because as a young adult, I have citizen rights and I know what to do when a cop may approach me," said **Carter, RHI Participant & Youth Ambassador**.

“This partnership and training has been in the works since before the pandemic, and was halted at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is great to see its launch and witness the response from our high school students as they participate” said **Natisha Romain, Director of Adolescent Youth Programs at RHI**. “They have left the training sessions more informed and exclaiming that they wish they learned this content in their schools. One even saying they wished their friends knew what they know now.”

“This has been a good experience because it makes me feel safer when I go outside because I know what to do if a cop stops me and asks me questions. I learned about the Gang Database and that the cops are watching you, and it is always good to not try to do things that incriminate you,” said **Blue, RHI Participant & Youth Ambassador**.

Beginning in September 20, 2022 until December 16, 2022, the training series will offer 24 workshops at the RHI headquarters in Red Hook, Brooklyn. This training series is part of the comprehensive programming for Red Hook youth attending high school (ages 14 – 21), as they work toward their high school diploma, develop a post-secondary plan, gain paid job training and work experience, strengthen their social supports, and exercise their leadership in the community. Workshops run 6pm-8pm every Tuesday and Thursday. For more information or to join a class, please contact Natisha Romain, Director of Adolescent Youth Programs at RHI at natisha@rhicenter.org.

###

The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org