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Legal Aid and Red Hook Initiative Conclude Second Annual Know Your Rights Ambassador Training Series

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society and Red Hook Initiative (RHI)** announced the conclusion of the second annual Know Your Rights Ambassador Training Series, which educates students about the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) gang database, police encounters and youth organizing.

Participants who completed the training are now youth ambassadors who will continue to facilitate Know Your Rights workshops around these critical topics.

The 12-week training curriculum focused on the [rights](#) that New Yorkers have to protect themselves from illegal police searches amid an increase in stop-and-frisk under Mayor Eric Adams. According to recent [data](#), in 2022, the first year of the Adams administration, the NYPD made over 15,000 stops, the largest number of stops since 2015. These stops disproportionately target Black and Latinx communities, accounting for [89 percent](#) of all stops.

Additionally, attendees learned about the NYPD's gang raid tactics, and ways to fight the Department's overinclusive gang labeling. Youth ambassadors also learned how to become skillful and knowledgeable presenters to conduct workshops around this issue with their peers.

"NYPD stops are on the rise and New Yorkers – in particular people of color who are disproportionately targeted by police through illegal and unethical tactics – must know their rights during police encounters," 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.”

“Being able to provide the Know Your Rights training for a second year in a row has been a really rewarding experience”, said **Natisha Romain, Director of Adolescent Youth at Red Hook Initiative**. “I know that I am part of something that will provide information and resources that can be used at any point in their lives and that the youth can share with their friends, family, and loved ones. This program is producing leaders who will someday make major changes in the justice system!”

The training series ran through December 11, 2023, 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. For more information or to join a future class, please contact Natisha Romain, Director of Adolescent Youth Programs at RHI at natisha@rhicenter.org.

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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