

# Locals take part in Youth Summer Summit

The Family and Children's Association, a leading health and human services nonprofit organization on Long Island, held a culmination event for its 2021 Youth Summer Summit last month. A five-week program, the summit brought

together 30 student leaders from the Village of Hempstead for leadership training, discussion and brainstorming with the goal of creating a safer, healthier Hempstead.

The summit elicited civic engagement discussion with presentations by and dialog with local, county, state and federal government officials including County Legislator Siela Bynoe, who serves Lakeview, and State Sen. Kevin Thomas,

who serves West Hempstead, among others. The event, which was held at the African American Museum of Nassau County in Hempstead, also gave the participants the opportunity to present their visions for substance use prevention and social justice in their communities, and how to best reach their peers in high schools and communities throughout Nassau County.

"The mission of the summit is to pro-



THE FAMILY AND Children's Association Youth Summer Summit culminated last month with an event at Hempstead's African American Museum of Nassau County. State Sen. Kevin Thomas, center, presented a citation to the FCA.

Photos courtesy Family and Children's Association

duce communicators and effective youth influencers throughout the Village of Hempstead by providing the language, tools and skills needed to become prevention minded, civically engaged, and socially conscious," said FCA President and CEO Dr. Jeffrey L. Reynolds. "We are grateful to Columbia Records, state and federal funders for the generous donation that made this summit possible."

The guest speakers educated summit participants to on the responsibilities associated with their positions and

engaged in interactive dialog. The Youth Summer Summit curriculum kicked off with a presentation and discussion of the vibrant history of Hempstead as a thriving commercial hub on the east coast, including a photo/video tour of its historical buildings and the contextual connection of the diverse cultures that make up Hempstead's current demography.

The students were also introduced to the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Youth Leadership Initiative program, which emphasizes the power of community coalitions to prevent substance misuse through collaborative community efforts. The course is designed to encourage youth to think critically about their roles as leaders in social change, and move forward with substance use and misuse prevention tools

A public health and social justice component led the students through a discussion of the dynamics of public health including what it is, how it is different from clinical medicine, who's responsible for doing it, how it is done and how its interventions are used to improve the health of populations and save lives. The program was presented through guest speakers and video presentations and involved summit participant research and discussion.

The 2021 Youth Summer Summit was made possible in part through a \$25,000 donation from Columbia Records/Sony Music.

Courtesy Family and Children's Association; compiled by Nakeem Grant

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