



Newport Advisory Council • April 29, 2019

The Newport Advisory Council Meeting was a great experience to see what happens behind closed doors. Everyone was there to serve a purpose and to create a solution to a problem. I can see the community really cares about the youth and they want to do whatever they can to make their dreams continue. I thank all of them for showing me their hard work in their community and inspiring me to do better and continue to make a change in mine. I am extremely excited to see how the Newport youth are going to grow with their programs and businesses. I first experienced the Institute a year ago at the Job Shadow Day at the Boston Museum of Science. In June I served as a youth delegate to the 14th Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development. The summit is a week long program that trains students in leadership skills and exposes them to careers in “sustainability.” At the Summit, I met teens from Holyoke and Martha's Vineyard and learned about their experiences with the Institute. They told me about how Marianne and her team made many things happen for them and gave them bigger and better opportunities. The Summit motivated me to start working harder for myself and for my community. A year later, it's 2019 and I've seen myself grow in ways I never would have thought. I have seen myself take on more responsibilities and learn how to be independent. Through the Institute's efforts, I have participated in many community projects: For example, I volunteered with both Hungry Fridays and Farm Fresh RI. I have attended conferences and even got to meet Senator Whitehouse! My sister and I organized clothing donations from our High school and consignment stores for our winter clothing drive. The Institute's College Prep program helped me to connect to college resources and college field trips to University of Massachusetts Dartmouth as well as University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and Rhode Island School of Design. The Institute's team has made me think more seriously about my future and what I want to achieve. It has also taught me that my actions now matter and planning for the future is a very important step in achieving my dreams. **Lya Perez, Future Health Care Practitioner**

I became involved with the Stone Soup Leadership Institute through my sister, Lya. For my first project with the Institute I helped design a poster for their annual Warm Clothing Drive. Being part of this project, changed my life, gave me perspective and motivated me to try harder for my own dreams. Designing this poster helped me find my passion for art. Thanks to them, I've now participated in many activities outside of school that are relevant to my interests in art: I regularly attend an afterschool program at New Urban Arts, I recently went on a college field trip to URI, RIC and RISD. I also had the opportunity to volunteer with other organizations such as Hungry Fridays for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service. Thanks to these opportunities, my sister and I are now the founding members of the Rhode Island Youth Leadership Initiative. We even helped to create our new logo and website: www.RIYLI.org Participating in the Institute's program has taught me to experience new things in life, to not give up and to work hard to ensure that all youth voices are heard. It has taught me that it only takes one person to speak up and make a change. It is important for Newport and other youth to join the Institute because it is a great start to help prepare for the future. Being involved will help them to meet new people, connect with other programs, learn soft skills, try new activities, visit colleges, and prepare them for the real world. The program has benefited my life in so many good ways and I hope to share it with other youth like me. **Leaslie Perez, Future Graphic Artist/Business**