

RIYAC Newsletter

In this issue of the RIYAC (Refugee & Immigrant Youth Advisory Council) newsletter, we will explore:

- The BIPOC Youth Artistic Showcase and Workshop
- Joining the Justice for Washington Youth Coalition (JWAY)
- Attending the Refugee Community Building Conference
- Hosting a Look2Justice Workshop
- The Youth Financial Assistance Program
- Our four subprojects
- Community resources
- RIYAC council member corner

BIPOC Youth Artistic Showcase and Workshop



[View from above the BIPOC Youth Artistic Showcase and Workshop]



[Video of a live performance by neo-soul singer Isaiah Banks]

RIYAC hosted the BIPOC Youth Artistic Showcase and Workshop on August 15th at the Columbia City Gallery in Seattle, celebrating talented youth artists from across King County. It was a great success, with live music, various performances, and a showcase of excellent art from King County youth.

RIYAC is excited to let folks know that more than 200 community members came out to show support to the Youth Art Exhibition!

A special thank you to:

- Youth artists for their work
- Columbia City Gallery for hosting the event
- Pratt Fine Arts Center and Fern for supplying the Exhibition
- Potbelly Sandwich Works for providing catering
- Community organizations and organizers for being part of the event
- Community members for showing up and showing out!
- Public Health of Seattle and King County Best Starts for Kids Division for providing funding so we could make this event a reality!



[Zavian Clayton speaking to the community about his art]

Youth Artists

Thank you to the wonderful youth artists who took part in our event! Their art and youth healing stories were inspirational and incredible, and if you are interested in following their artistic journeys, feel free to follow their social media posted on the pictures.



Ilhan Ahmed, West Seattle



Seyum Belete, Skyway



Tassanee Hill, Judkins Park



Tiyanna Kreal, Kent



Zavian Clayton, Renton



Charisma Adkison, Auburn



Diana Silvaniuk, Auburn



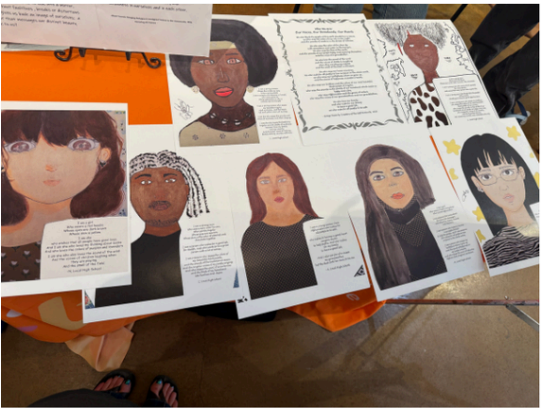
Anvitha Babu, Bothell



[Art and poetry from refugee and immigrant children]



[Logo for *Stories of Arrival: Refugee and Immigrant Youth Voices Poetry*]



[Art and poetry from refugee and immigrant children]

Stories of Arrival: Refugee and Immigrant Youth Voices Poetry was founded by Merna Ann Hecht and ELL Teacher Carrie Stradley. This project gave young people, many coming from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, an outlet through poetry to articulate their own sense of longing, grief, and hope connected to both the experience of living through heartbreaking conflicts and their dreams of how they want to contribute to creating peaceful solutions.



[Local singer Isaiah Banks performing at the Youth Art Exhibit]

Thank you, Community Feel and local singer, Isaiah Banks

Shout-out to Community Feel and local singer Isaiah Banks for putting on a wonderful R&B Performance at the event!

Community Feel is a local organization focused on the promotion of local Seattle artists. Helping connect local artists with local community organizations and community events.

Thank you, Cultivate South Park and Baba Kauna, for a wonderful Drumming performance!

Located in the South Park neighborhood of South Seattle. Cultivate South Park specializes in community development, identifying, connecting, and celebrating the gifts already present in the South Park neighborhood. Their youth internship program will be presenting collaborative art and spoken-word poetry at the event!



[Dr. Marissa Winmill with Kent-Meridian student at their book release]

Thank you Dr. Marissa Winmill and Kent-Meridian Students, for sharing your stories

Thank you to Dr. Marissa Winmill and the five Kent-Meridian students who were part of the We Are America: Kent 2 that shared their stories and dreams to our community!

Led by Dr. Marissa Winmill, Kent-Meridian students took part in the We Are America: Kent 2 book release, presenting their powerful stories and experiences as immigrants.

Thank you, Columbia City Gallery, for hosting us!

"Columbia City Gallery is a collective that brings together emerging and professional artists working in diverse media, including painting, printmaking, mixed media, sculpture, glass, ceramics, and jewelry."

"The Gallery provides exhibit space for local artists, opportunities for cultural exchange and learning, and a gathering place for our neighbors to experience art – in the heart of the historic district of Columbia City."

- From the Columbia City Gallery website



[Photo courtesy of Columbia City Gallery from their website]

Joining the Justice for Washington Youth Coalition



WHAT WE DO



Charter



Advocacy

WHAT'S NEXT



Outreach



Legislative Priorities

RIYAC is excited to announce that we have joined the Justice for Washington Youth Coalition (JWAY)!

In partnership with the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and other like-minded community organizations, JWAY is the only operating statewide coalition focused on youth criminal legal system reforms, with the goal of bringing system change to the current juvenile justice system.

Bringing legal system reforms is necessary to eliminate racist policies, center the voices of those impacted by the system, promote true rehabilitation, and eliminate trauma for young people.

Attending the Refugee Community Building Conference



[Poster for the Refugee Community Building Conference]

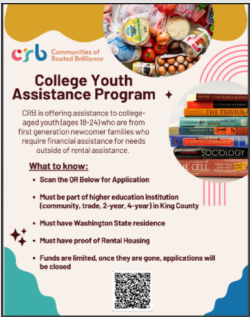
Alan, our Advocacy Coordinator, attended the Refugee Community Building Conference on September 18. The Refugee Community Building Conference is a powerful catalyst for learning, bold dialogue, and dynamic networking. It fosters community connections, provides professional development and leadership opportunities, and celebrates the economic and cultural contributions of our communities.

Hosting the Look2Justice Workshop



RIYAC members, youth from various organizations, and the general youth population attended a Youth Advocacy workshop on September 23, hosted by **Look2Justice**. L2J focuses on youth empowerment and civic advocacy programs that train young people impacted by the criminal legal system to become grassroots organizers and leaders.

Youth Financial Assistance Program



[Poster for the College Youth Assistance Program]

Thanks to the generous support from Young Grantmakers of the Greater Seattle YMCA and the Raikes Foundation, we are offering support to college-aged youth (ages 18-24) from first-generation newcomer families who need financial assistance for needs beyond rental assistance. Funds are first-come, first-served. Once funding has been used, the application will be closed. If found eligible, youth will receive a one-time payment of up to \$500, depending on need.

RIYAC Sub-Projects



[Nurse giving a shot to a child]

Public Health

Promoting mental health awareness focused on helping immigrant and refugee communities understand and identify causes and effects.



[Students in a circle in a class discussion]



[Protesting anti-immigration laws]

Immigration

Immigrant right/know-your-right info sheets focused on immigrant/refugee families.



[A variety of food]

Education

Mentorship program for upcoming juniors and seniors in high school who are on a path to be first-generation college students.

Food Security

Supporting vulnerable neighborhoods, enhance access to food and health resources, and foster community resilience and well-being. We are aiming to have pop-up food pantries in food deserts around the King County area.

Community Resources

Youth Support Resources in King County

<https://youthresources.kingcounty.gov/>

This site provides information about youth & family resources in King County. Resources may be filtered by type of service, age, and desired travel distance.

Services include Case Management, Education, Financial Assistance/Incentives, Healthcare & Wellness, and more.

HearMeWA

If you are under 25 or know someone who is under 25 years old who is facing challenges, call 888-357-1634 or text HearMeWA to 738477.

You will be connected with 24/7 trained crisis counselors who will listen to your concerns and struggles.

No matter the reason, they will be there to listen and assist.



Community Partnership



The **Highline Heritage Museum** would like to connect with you!
We have many opportunities to showcase your story!

Upcoming Events

We have many upcoming events for partnerships – set up a table for your organizations, put together an arts & craft station, whatever you can think of!

- Taco Festival – Jun 27th, 11–4pm
- Frida Kahlo Festival – Jul 11th, 12–4pm
- Multicultural Festival – Jul 25th, 1–3pm
- Arts–A–Glow – Sep 12th, 5–8pm
- Boo–in–Burien – Oct 24th, 12–4pm
- DB Cooper Festival – Nov 14th
- La Posada – Dec 5th, 5–8pm

Contact:
events@highlinemuseum.org

Radio Interview

Come share your story on our radio show, it only takes 30 minutes!



Ideas?



Are you interested in partnering with the museum for your event? We would love to connect and brainstorm!

If you are part of the Highline (Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, SeaTac, White Center) community, or just someone who is interested in attending community events. Highline Heritage Museum has a number of events in the coming months geared towards local communities and families that you can attend!

RIYAC Council Member Corner

Since its establishment in 2017, RIYAC has always done its best to give youth from newcomer and refugee communities a chance to grow as leaders. Through our projects and work, RIYAC members have tackled a wide

variety of issues that affect the daily lives of the communities they are part of. These include mental health, transportation, food insecurity, community violence prevention, and more. We are proud of the work that we have done and the leaders that RIYAC has built.

On this page, we will be giving an opportunity for past and present RIYAC members to give their thoughts on joining RIYAC, why they joined RIYAC, and how RIYAC has left an impact on them.



[Portrait of RIYAC member Yousuf Mohamed]

“I joined RIYAC because I wanted to make a positive impact in my community. Through RIYAC, I found a strong sense of belonging while developing important skills such as communication, leadership, and responsibility. I have participated in community events, met many people, and built meaningful connections through countless positive interactions.”

Yousuf Mohamed, RIYAC Member since 2025

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