



## NEW AMERICANS WELCOME CENTER

# IMMIGRANT RIGHTS SUMMIT

Local leaders, organizations and students from our **El Centro** class participated in the first joint **Staten Island Immigrant Youth Leadership & Staten Island Immigrant Council Immigrants' Rights Summit** on Thursday, May 23rd.

Guest speakers included Ahmed Kargbo from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Theresa Thanjan, Director of Member Engagement at the New York Immigration Coalition.

Several important topics of concern were discussed, including higher education, drivers licenses, healthcare and insurance concerns, and the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act.

Guests attending this meeting were encouraged to send letters and make phone calls to local politicians to make their voices heard and affect change throughout their communities.



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MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS!

# NAWC GOES TO FLEET WEEK!



To celebrate **Fleet Week** the students from our CYO class took a trip to visit two ships docked at the USS Sullivan's Homeport Pier at Front Street.

This year, about 2,600 sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen participated in Fleet Week, as well as five U.S. Navy ships, three U.S. Coast Guard cutters, four U.S. Naval Academy Yard Patrol boats, one Military Sealift Command ship, and two Royal Canadian Navy vessels.

Ships visiting our borough included:

- The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), from Norfolk, Virginia.
- The Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Milwaukee (LCS 5), from Mayport, Florida.
- The Keeper-class cutter USCGC Katherine Walker (WLM 552), from Bayonne, New Jersey.
- The Medium endurance cutter USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909), from Kittery, Maine.

Students were excited to be given with the opportunity to speak with the current members of maritime service from both of the ships and ask them many questions. They were also excited to be able to tour the ships and learn more about these amazing ships. For some of these sailors, it was their first-time seeing New York City.

After discussions with the sailors the students learned that many of them had decided on a career in the Navy right after college. The students all extremely enjoyed the tour of the vessels and the experience of learning about the Navy, ships and experiences in our city's harbor.





# ASK YOUR NAI?

**Q:** I need to see a lawyer.  
Where can I go?

**A:** There is a lawyer available every day at the St. George Branch of the New York Public Library located at 5 Central Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301. You will need to call 311 first to make an appointment before going. There is also an attorney available at Councilwoman Debi Rose's office located at 130 Stuyvesant Place, 10301, Sixth Floor. Call 718-556-7370 to make an appointment.

**Q:** I have no health insurance and I need to see a doctor.

**A:** You can go to Community Health Center of Richmond, 235 Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, 10305 (718-876-1732), or visit Gotham Health, 165 Vanderbilt Avenue, Staten Island, 10304 (844-692-4692). Both offices will advise you as to their fees; typically, patients pay on a sliding scale according to income.

**Q:** I am looking for some free activities this summer. Any ideas?

**A:** Yes! All ages are welcome to join Chair Yoga classes at the CYO Senior Center. Classes are free of charge and run every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. through August at 120 Anderson Avenue, Staten Island, 10304.

# IRMA VELEZ VISITS THE CYO!



In the week following one of our classes exciting visit to Homeport Pier at Front Street to tour naval ships docked for Fleet Week, the students were visited in their class by a long time Staten Islander; Irma Karina Cruz Velez.

Irma has been an active participant at El Centro for many years. Irma Karina Cruz Velez is now serving in the Navy in Great Lakes, Illinois.

She is incredibly excited to soon begin her assignment aboard a ship in the Great Lakes. She spoke with the class about all of the many preparations for her admission into the Navy and how to prepare for her military career.

She is very happy with her decision to join the Navy and says that her whole perspective about military service has changed. She feels like it is like being part of one big family. Irma inspired all of our students with her story. The students greatly enjoyed meeting Irma, and asking her questions about her life in the Navy.





# New York City's YMCA WHERE THERE'S A Y THERE'S A WAY

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## Meet Beatrice Ajayi!

My name is Beatrice Ajayi. I was born in Nigeria; a country in Africa. Moving to the United States as an immigrant was not as easy as I thought it would be. I came to the United States at the age of 12 and attended Bronxwood Preparatory Academy in the Bronx. Attending school in the United States has always been my dream.

I always thought it would be easy for people to get along. My first day at school was overwhelming because I was not as accepted as I thought I would be; this might have been a result of a change in environment and having to get to know people.

Coming to the United States was very overwhelming and surprising because I had to adjust to the American culture such as the greetings, food, taking transportation, etc. I also had changed my name to an English name because I was afraid my Nigerian name "Oluwatomisin" would not be pronounced correctly. Growing up in the United States has been a great experience and now I can say I have adjusted to the culture and way of life. Despite my first experiences, I graduated high school at the age of 15 as one of the top students of my class.

Ever since I graduated, I have continued my education at College of Staten Island; majoring in Psychology pre-med. College life was not as easy as I expected. Right now, I'm a senior and want to continue my education in medical school to become a Pediatrician.

When I got accepted to the CUNY Service Corps, I had the opportunity to work at YMCA's New Americans Welcome Center in Staten Island, a place where Immigrants are able to fulfill their dreams. It was a great experience working with my fellow immigrants because I was able to understand how they feel and the stress they go through. At the YMCA, I was able to learn new things such as assisting immigrants with enrollment applications, conducting outreach to YMCA patrons, and also utilizing computer software for data entry. I have experienced immigrants leaving this organization and they are full of happiness because they were able to achieve their goals with the help of YMCA the New Americans Welcome Center. At the YMCA, I was able to learn that there is unity in diversity, and we are one human family no matter where we come from.

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