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CCRB, NYU Host Inaugural Summit on Youth-Police Relations in New York City

More Than 100 Young New Yorkers Attend as Oversight Agency Joins NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy & Research, NYU Law Center on Race, Inequality & the Law in Hosting Conference on Policing

New York, NY – The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) on Tuesday held its first-ever conference on the relationship between young people in New York City and the police. The event, “Speak Up, Speak Out: A Youth Summit on Policing in New York City,” brought together young New Yorkers, practitioners in police oversight and reform, and criminal justice scholars for a conversation about policing.

The Agency partnered with New York University’s McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research and the NYU Law Center on Race, Inequality and the Law to bring more than 100 New Yorkers between the ages of 10 and 24 to the NYU Kimmel Center. During the conference, young New Yorkers from the city’s five boroughs shared their experiences with policing, identified problems in their communities, and recommended solutions to public safety and police oversight practitioners and academics.

“Too often, young people in New York City feel that they have no outlet for talking about some of the issues that affect them on a day-to-day basis. This summit—a conference for youth and by youth—provided a platform for them to share their experiences and their ideas for moving New York forward,” said Fred Davie, chair of the CCRB. “The Agency learned a great deal from the conference’s participants, and we look forward to reviewing their suggestions for reform as we look to issue a report on their experiences in the coming months.”

More than 1,000 alleged victims of police misconduct reported to the CCRB in 2018 were between the ages of 10 and 24.

During the summit, participants engaged in a real-time poll about policing in schools. A quarter of respondents expressed a belief that police officers should be assigned to schools, while a third said that officers never should be assigned to a school. Results of a separate poll on street encounters

with law enforcement officers indicated that half of respondents feel safe calling the police only “sometimes.”

“The summit provided a unique opportunity for young people to express their thoughts about policing, discuss how their lives have been impacted, and propose solutions that will improve relations between their communities and law enforcement,” said Michael A. Lindsey, executive director of the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research. “We look forward to seeing the dialogue continue in the years to come. Furthermore, we were thrilled to work with the CCRB on this and commend them for facilitating the beginning of this dialogue.”

“This summit provided young people with a rare opportunity to engage constructively with experts and advocates and focus on the ways policing and the criminal legal system shape their experiences,” said Anthony Thompson, faculty director of the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law. “If we want to address biased policing, it’s important that the voices of those most affected by law enforcement practices are at the center of the conversation. The summit was a great reminder of that fundamental truth.”

As part of its effort to maximize engagement from young New Yorkers during the Youth Summit, the CCRB in December organized a Youth Advisory Council. The working committee is made up of 19 young leaders who were selected by the Agency after demonstrating a dedication to criminal justice issues and improving police-community relations during the application process.

Council members expressed concern about the well-being of young people both in New York City and nationwide, which they cited as a motivating factor for the Youth Summit. The YAC opened the event with a moment of silence to honor the memory of Trayvon Martin, who was shot and killed in Florida on February 26, 2012, seven years to the day before the event.

“Listening to different perspectives of other young people has led me to a deeper understanding of the role that the youth play in the well-being of New York City,” said Queens resident Christopher Mitchell, 12, a member of the Youth Advisory Council. “The success of the Youth Summit has taken us a step closer to forming a stronger bond with those that are trusted to enforce the laws of this great city. It’s an honor to stand beside young people that are hungry for change! I look forward to continued work with the YAC as we use what we learned to help improve our city.”

In addition to playing an instrumental role in organizing the Youth Summit, the Youth Advisory Council will continue to advise CCRB staff about its efforts to engage young New Yorkers and serve as ambassadors to their communities about the agency throughout 2019. Members of the Youth Advisory Council, who range in age from 11 to 24, together represent every borough in New York City.

The event was sponsored by the McSilver Institute, the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law, and the Pinkerton Foundation, an independent grant-making organization that supports community-based programs for children, youth and families in economically disadvantaged areas in New York City.

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The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) is the largest police oversight entity in the nation and is empowered to investigate, mediate, prosecute, and recommend disciplinary action for complaints alleging misconduct by NYPD officers. See NYC Charter § 440(c)(1). The agency's jurisdiction includes excessive and unnecessary force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and use of offensive language. To further this mission, CCRB issues monthly, biannual, and special statistical and qualitative reports analyzing trends and recurring issues arising from the many thousands of civilian complaints it receives each year.