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**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth for Justice Summer Academy**  
**YFJ SUMMER ACADEMY 2020**  
**ACADEMIA DE VERANO JOVENES POR LA JUSTICIA**

SAN RAFAEL, CA (September 17, 2020) – [Alcohol Justice](#) & [Youth for Justice](#) announced the successful conclusion of the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Youth for Justice Summer Academy that took place July 27, 2020 to August 7, 2020. Due to #COVID19, the event was staged virtually with twenty-two participants from the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael participating in daily sessions via Zoom.

*This year's summer academy was a big challenge and a big success," said Maite Duran, Drug Free Communities Project Coordinator at Alcohol Justice, and founder of Youth For Justice. "Though COVID-19 prevented us from taking the youth on field trips or doing some of the hands-on activities that have proved so engaging in the past, we had great virtual sessions, producing unexpected excitement and personal growth among our young participants."*

*"I have noticed that my daughter has changed, a complete 180 since she has started participating in YFJ. She is now asking and answering questions at school without being afraid."*

- Blanca, Madeline's mother

Among this year's digital presenters were Maestro Ernesto Hernández, a Mayan elder and teacher, who presented the healing cultural component of the academy; art lessons from Bay Area artist Daniel Panko, relevant to the camp's curricula; and Hip Hop 4 Change guiding participants to develop conscious rap.

*"My children really enjoy the Youth for Justice Summer Academy. One of their favorite parts of the summer academy is creating art. I enjoy them participating in these kinds of activities because it allows them to continue to develop the skills they have. Art is also a healthy way to keep them entertained."*

- Betty, Jeffrey and Yamileth's mother

Other topics discussed this year from a decolonizing perspective were nutrition, healing, climate change and of course the negative consequences of using alcohol and other drugs.

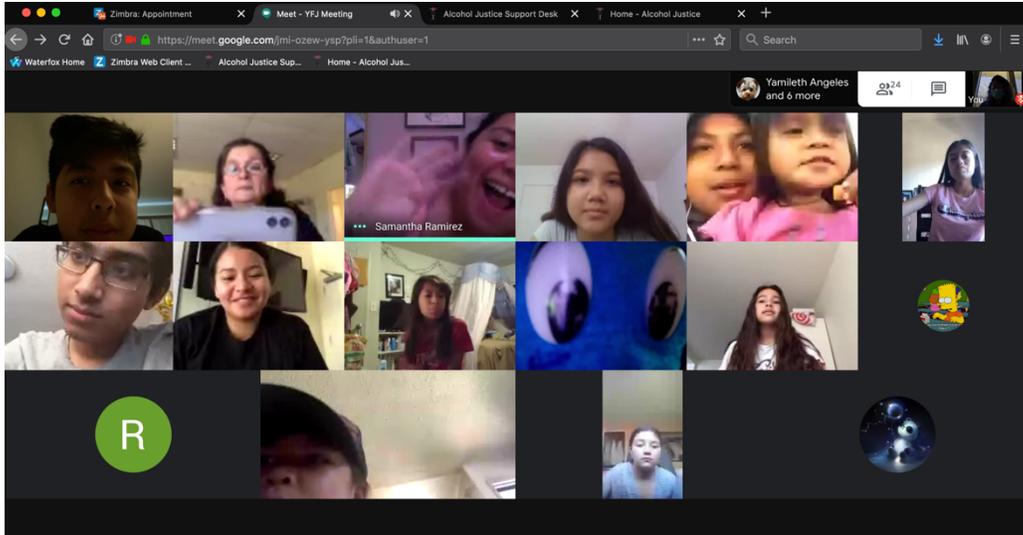
*"The youth were eager to participate, they had fun and all the presenters enjoyed their experience," stated Christina Mira, Youth for Justice Outreach/Promotora. "This speaks volumes to the need youth feel to have meaningful and positive connections with their peers and supportive staff."*

*"This year my son was very focused and looked forward to participating in the Summer Academy every day. He was particularly very interested in the Bean Jar activity. He learned how to plant a bean from start to finish, and this made the learning experience unique for him. I also noticed that he was determined to prepare his Vitamin Water with chia and lemon every morning. He seems to be more aware of his health and makes an effort to avoid sugary drinks even now that the Summer Academy has ended."*

- Edith, Andy's mother

Generous support for the Youth for Justice Summer Academy was received from the [Marin County Juvenile Probation Department](#), the [San Rafael Alcohol and Drug Coalition](#), [Youth for Justice](#), and [Alcohol Justice](#)

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Virtual Storytelling with Samantha. Photo credit: Eunice Iglesias



Youth for Justice Members gather next to a graffiti banner as the Summer Academy Live event comes to a close. Photo credit: Eunice Iglesias

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