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NYC Kids

Summit Aims to Improve Community and Police Relationship After Eric Garner

By **Nicholas Rizzi** on February 27, 2015 8:17am

@nickr15

EMERSON HILL — An annual event that focuses on empowering Staten Island youth will aim this year to bridge the gap between the community and the NYPD in the wake of the death of **Eric Garner**.



Island Voice's ninth-annual Youth Empowerment Summit aims ...

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Island Voice's ninth-annual

Youth Empowerment Summit is a free event open to students of all ages. The discussion will focus on community engagement by police in an effort to try to repair damage caused by the death of the 43-year-old Staten Island father, who died after police used an apparent chokehold while trying to arrest him for selling untaxed cigarettes.

"There's a real grassroots problem," said Bobby Digi, president and CEO for Island Voice.

"This is, honestly, how can we prevent the recurrence of police brutality, or youth getting in the way of law enforcement or law enforcement overreacting? We want to have a truthful and honest conversation. I don't think it's happened [yet]."

The summit will feature a panel of community leaders, clergy and retired NYPD officers to talk with students about police conduct, race relations, compliance with police and protesting.

Digi said the group hopes to brainstorm solutions with audience members on repairing the damaged police-community relations and present them to local elected officials and the mayor's office.

In addition to the panel discussions, the event will also have music, keynote speakers, workshops and presentations. Island Voice will give out awards to people who have helped youth in the community to Charlie Balducci, president of NYC Arts Cypher; Chris Allen, a teacher at P.S 57; Staten Island Borough Commander Assistant Chief Edward Delatorre and Jasmine Ray, president and CEO of **Wallball World**.

The Island Voice Youth Empowerment Summit will be on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wagner College. To register for the free event, click [here](#).

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