



Self-Reliant Communities

For Immediate Release

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Isles Youth Institute Commencement June 20 at 10:00AM



Photo: Isles Youth Institute Graduation 2016

Trenton, N.J. –The 2017 Isles Youth Institute Commencement Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 20, 2017, at 10:00 AM at the Mercer County Park Marina and Boathouse in West Windsor, NJ. Commencement will include an awards ceremony and student speeches, with a reception to follow. Retired Trenton teacher, stage actor, and community organizer Ivey Avery will be the keynote speaker. Isles expects an audience of families, teachers, friends, and other supporters.

The commencement ceremony is the culmination of a year’s worth of academic and job training for students at Isles Youth Institute (IYI), an alternative school that emphasizes leadership development and civic engagement for students who have dropped out of traditional high school. Students participate in afterschool activities and volunteer extensively in the community. Staff works with students to help them apply to college and pursue employment.

Isles, a community development and environmental nonprofit in Trenton, NJ, started New Jersey’s first YouthBuild in 1995. Since then, more than 1,000 young people have successfully completed Isles Youth Institute, which is now a partner of the County of Mercer’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program as well.

IYI’s mission is to foster self-reliance through education by partnering with local nonprofits to guide young people ages 16-24 to obtain their state-issued high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. Students are thoroughly prepared for their future endeavors at Isles Youth Institute, which offers programs in job readiness to explore career pathways, leadership development, life skills like financial literacy, as well as a wide range of educational and social activities.

“Isles Youth Institute was a new experience, a fresh start, and an environment of mutual respect and opportunities. IYI is a place where your efforts match your results, and is run by fun and inspirational people and attended by diverse

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individuals with different stories and pasts. Isles Youth Institute staff helps you become better if you allow yourself to be helped,” says Ian Johnson a 2017 graduate.

“Our students are the most resilient people I know. They embody the true meaning of grit,” states Shenette Gray, Director of Isles Youth Institute. “Our young people will become the change agents of this capital city and revive that great slogan ‘Trenton Makes and the World Takes’...this is the exact purpose of education.”

The IYI Commencement Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 20th at 10:00 AM at the Mercer County Park – Marina and Boathouse, 334 S Post Road, West Windsor. The event is open to the public. For more information, please contact Shenette Gray at 609-341-4751.

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