

# TEEN PICKS



**For The Next  
Generation of  
Changemakers**



I am Akira Guevara -- a senior at NYC Museum School, a soon to be freshman at FIT, and an intern for the education department at The Joyce Theater. My intern project was to take over the newest edition of The Joyce's Kids' Picks, and I chose to focus on The Next Generation of Changemakers: Generation Z. I was inspired by my own experiences as a Black girl from the Bronx that led me to a life of activism, where my goal is to educate and empower other teens of color.

*“Gen Z is making change, one protest at a time” -Washington Post*

# A Guide to Being A Teen Activist

Young people have always been influential in political and social movements -- look at the Anti-War movement of the 1960s or, more recently, the Black Lives Matter movement. The traumatic events of the past year have led many teens to seek change. If you are one of those teens seeking change but you don't know how to start, read this Guide to Being a Teen Activist.

## 1. ACT OUT OF PASSION

Passion for a cause and determination to see a solution are what drives every activist. Fighting for large scale change is not easy, which is why you must be driven by passion. Personally, my passion for human rights and Black lives keeps me going and doing my part in the movement, despite the obstacles. Find a cause you care about and let your passion guide you.

## 2. STAY INFORMED

You've probably heard the phrase “educate yourself” in the past year, but what does it mean? It means taking the time to learn about current issues within your community and world. You should keep up with current events and stay aware. It must be said, though, that there is a difference between staying aware and unhealthily immersing yourself in world issues. Remember to take breaks from traumatic news, and also fact check all information you find.

*“Gen Z is already changing the world” -Forbes*

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## 3. START LOCALLY

Though trying to tackle all the world's issues may sound appealing, I bet it would be extremely exhausting. Instead, I suggest starting small. Start by identifying issues in your own community. Get to know who your local representatives are and become familiar with the policies that affect your community.

## 4. BE LOUD & PROUD

Your voice matters. You should never be afraid to advocate for the issues you care about. Building confidence to speak up is easiest when you are surrounded by those who share your desire for change. You can find these people by joining or creating social justice clubs (I co-founded my high school's Black Student Union). You can also join local community programs, like the NYC Youth Leadership Council.

# A Guide To Staying Sane

I'm sure you've heard some variation of "it's been a rough year" plenty of times in the last year, and it's probably gotten quite exhausting. So instead of telling you how hard it's been, I'm going to give you tips on how to stay sane during this unusual time.

## 1. Take Screen Breaks

If you're anything like me, you spend your days hunched over your desk, or craning your neck towards some device. Staring at a screen for hours while attending school online can be exhausting -- and it strains your eyes. Your eyes literally get tired from the strain: this is called screen fatigue. So remember to take frequent screen breaks (this includes phones!).

## 2. Go Outside!

One way to relieve screen fatigue is to take a break from all screens and go for a walk. Breathe fresh air (with a mask, of course) and take the time to appreciate your environment.

## 3. Grades Do Not Define You

No one expects you to be a perfect student during this global pandemic. It is understandable if your grades have slipped, or if you have lost motivation. Remember that you are more than your grades, and they are not a reflection of your worth.

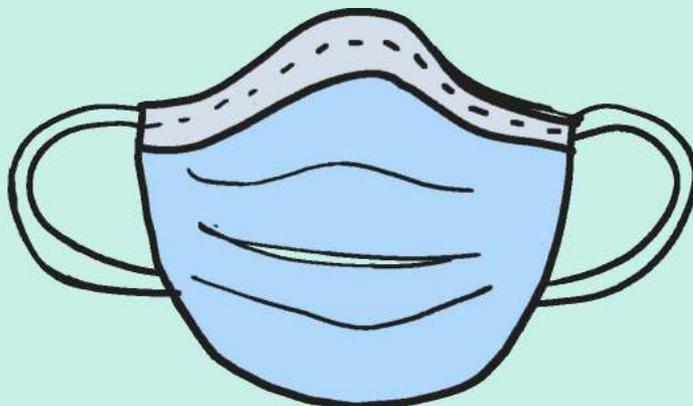
# A Guide To Staying Sane

## 4. Learn A New Skill

Now is the perfect time to learn a new skill, since we are spending so much time at home on our devices. The options are endless -- you could learn to code, or sew, or even learn a language! If you like being physically active, try running or biking in your neighborhood.

## 5. To Be Sane, You Must Be Safe

It is important to be safe around others. This not only means wearing a mask, but also staying aware. The Covid-19 vaccine was recently made available to all New Yorkers ages 12 and up. To find a testing site, use the NYC Vaccine Finder, and to stay updated on the Coronavirus, watch HipHopPublicHealth on YouTube.



# ADVICE TO TEEN ACTIVISTS:

## FROM TEEN ACTIVISTS

Gen Z has been the face of all the major movements in the last year because of our ability to use social media to spread information. We have figured out how to use Instagram and TikTok to encourage social awareness among the next generation of voters. I spoke with two teen girls, Lyric Miller (17) and Jessica Lee (19), who use their social media platforms to fight for change.



@lyricsworld  
lyricsworld.com

### LYRIC MILLER

-Fashion designer and Fine Arts major at Frank Sinatra School Of The Arts High School in Queens, NY.

-Felt "heartbroken and obsolete" because she was forbidden to participate in the George Floyd protests of June 2020 so she founded her fashion brand **LyricsWorld**.

-**LyricsWorld** began with hand-made jewelry inspired by the Flower Power movement of the early 1970s. The jewelry was created with real flowers in a resin cast.

-Earned \$400 which she divided and donated to ACLU, The Black Trans Women Fund, and The Brooklyn Bail Fund.



"USE YOUR TALENTS, WHETHER  
THEY BE ARTISTIC OR ACADEMIC"

# ADVICE TO TEEN ACTIVISTS:

## FROM TEEN ACTIVISTS



@versacelee23

With such a large platform, hate comments and negative pushback is unavoidable for Jessica Lee, but she just ignores it. She says there will always be pushback, but she has to focus on why she's an activist. Jessica grew up as the only Asian girl in her classes, and because of that, she says, **"I'm an activist because I never had anyone like me to look up to."** Jessica wants to inspire the younger girls that follow her and show them that they too can find success, and they too are worthy.

### Jessica Lee

- Began gaining popularity on TikTok in July 2020 for making fashion videos. She now has grown to 300,000 followers.
- Uses her platform to speak on important issues like the Stop Asian Hate movement and the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Participates in and spreads information on protests in New York City and California.

**"IT'S BETTER TO EDUCATE THAN  
SPEAK FROM NEGATIVITY"**

# Gen Z Making Change

**Livia Rose Johnson, 20** (@liviarosejohnson @warriorsinthegarden)

After the death of George Floyd, Livia began organizing protests in NYC and co-founded the activist group Warriors in the Garden.

**Behruz Mahmudov and Kayla Wang**

Juniors in the Carl Sagan STEM program at Forest Hills High School, these students created a project that studies how environmental conditions affect the “lungs” of a plant. They connect their studies of climate change to the communities it will affect most: minority communities.

**Hayat Muse, 17**

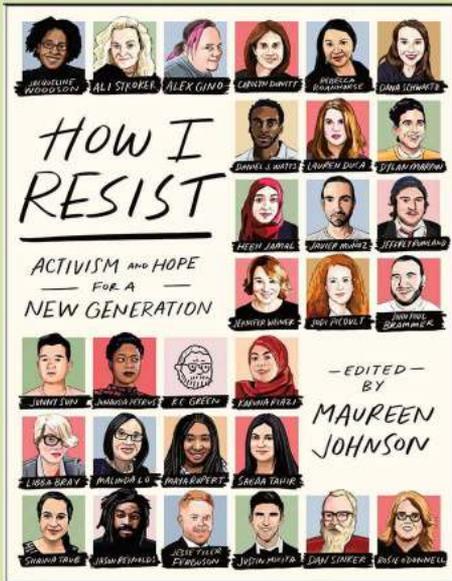
As co-founder of Kow iyo Labo, a non-profit that has been providing free tutoring for low-income Minneapolis students for the past two years, Hayat advocates for education reform. However, the organization's work is currently paused due to the Coronavirus.

**Aryaana Khan, 19**

Having grown up in Bangladesh, Aryaana is far too familiar with the dangerous affects of climate change. So when she moved to New York, she began working in the climate advocacy field, and is now apart of the Alliance For Climate Education. She is currently studying biology at The City College of New York and plans to use her education to promote climate advocacy.



# Check these Out



## HOW I RESIST: Activism And Hope For a New Generation

Edited by Maureen Johnson, this book is comprised of advice from activists in the form of essays and interviews. Johnson wanted to make a “resistance guide” specifically for teens, so read carefully!

Here is a gem from the beginning of the book:

**“None of us come into this world fully aware of who we are or what cause we want to take up. Make mistakes, they are inevitable.”**

## The Remix NETFLIX DOC

This is a light-hearted watch, because activism does not always have to be draining -- it can be educating yourself in fun ways, like watching a Netflix documentary! This documentary focuses on the influence of Black creators on Hip Hop and streetwear fashion. If you're a fan of early Hip Hop, you'll love getting to know the stylists behind stars like Biggie, Lil Kim, and Jay Z.

