

Hey y'all,

I'm Davis Summer, Founder and one of the Executive Coordinators of Greenville Youth Alliance. In June of 2020, after attending the YMCA Changemaker's Institute, I began working on an ongoing personal project of mine: Emergency Community Services, or ECS. ECS would be a new first responder agency in Greenville County. I began working to institute this in our county, and had countless young people reaching out to me, asking how they can be involved. It opened my eyes to the demand amongst teenagers to get involved and make change.

This synthesized with my experience in Youth in Government and the YMCA to form a solid belief: we must drive an increase in civic engagement to empower youth to make change. By getting involved in the community, volunteering, turning out to vote, learning more, running for office, and engaging with local government we can put the power into the hands of young people by building a culture of change. As a result of this, I, along with Ms. Olivia Peck, filed paperwork with the Secretary of State. This was the creation of GYA, on August 12th, 2020. Since then we've grown to a team of 12, and we have had some great successes.

I had a vision — a vision of impactful citizens, engaged young folks, and a community for change. Our goal is to get young people to care about civic engagement. We have a dream to create a culture that values change and progress. So, together, Olivia Peck and I founded Greenville Youth Alliance. At GYA, we're working to build that community. We want to get young people engaged in the community, to get them to learn about civics and local government, and to create a model for application in other communities. And all the board (or bored) meetings, coffee chats, and hours spent on hold in the local and state government bureaucracy have all been worth it because we have been working towards these goals.

Our successes so far might not be many, but they have been impressive nonetheless. For example, in November of 2020, we partnered with local Social Studies departments in high schools and county officials to help facilitate a 170 person increase in student poll managers (50 to 220), which was "in large part thanks to [Greenville Youth Alliance]." We've also hosted volunteer days, had an educational center to provide election knowledge and resources, and have partnered with local organizations to help provide them with volunteers.

I love Greenville Youth Alliance. I hope that this organization continues to grow and flourish in the coming months and years.

Sincerely,
Robert Davis Summer
Founder/Executive Coordinator
Greenville Youth Alliance