



The Princeton Club of Rochester

Nayeliz Santiago
Junior, Penfield High School

As Steve Jobs said, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” Nayeliz is demonstrating leadership by promoting race relations with some innovative and thought-provoking approaches.

Nayeliz has been involved in Penfield’s MOSAICS club since its inception at Penfield, and she has served as the club’s vice president. She embraces the MOSAICS mission of understanding and respect for different races and cultures, and found a unique way to educate her classmates and the school’s faculty about her own Hispanic roots by broadcasting her messaging to the entire school. Nayeliz explains:

“Hispanic heritage month fell right at the beginning of the school year. I put together facts about important Hispanic activists, the history of the month and Hispanic culture. I sent them in for our morning show so a fact could be aired each morning.”

Nayeliz continues putting forth innovative ways to prompt discussions on race among her peers. She has taped “fact sheets” on tables in the school cafeteria with statistics about racial demographics of teachers in Monroe County and across the nation, not only to spark a dialogue but also to help raise awareness of MOSAICS club and attract more participants to the club. She’s also working on creating “culture games” as a fun way to educate others about these serious race-related issues.

Nayeliz has attended four ROC2Change Summits. This year, her MOSAICS club is planning to host a Student Summit on Race as well as a student-led discussion during a faculty meeting. Their goal is to identify racial issues at the high school and discuss ways to foster solutions.

Teacher Jordan Garbarino describes Nayeliz as making significant strides.

“I have seen Nayeliz, the activist, grow exponentially over the last few years. She has learned a great deal about how to discuss aspects related to race -- particularly concerning how to effectively converse with someone who does not share your viewpoints. Her ability to carry conversations through barriers of discomfort and discord is impressive,” says Garbarino.

Keep thinking innovatively, Nayeliz, and congratulations!