



## Community Engagement Initiative - #Célébr'Action!

By Alexis Gardner, Social Connectedness Fellow 2019

Watch the video which showcases this event and many other #RisingYouth events:

[https://youtu.be/zaC\\_Ljdm-U](https://youtu.be/zaC_Ljdm-U)

Working in collaboration with TakingITGlobal and the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness (SCSC), #Célébr'Action was a special day involving program alumni and members of the community to celebrate over 2,000 community service projects being completed through #RisingYouth! #Célébr'Action consisted of a storytelling session with former #RisingYouth grantees, food and a collaborative graffiti art session. The goal of my community engagement initiative was to bring alumni together and create an opportunity to share challenges and successes experienced while conducting community projects. The intention was to demonstrate that regardless of differing backgrounds and communities, individuals often face similar challenges and barriers when engaging in youth leadership initiatives and that we can all learn from each other.

#Célébr'Action was hosted outside at *Nouvelle Vague* in the Old Port of Montréal on July 18, 2019. When deciding the format of my community engagement initiative I had a few key components that were important throughout the decision-making process. First, I wanted to host my event in a comfortable and trendy space. *Nouvelle Vague* offered this by having an open concept with picnic tables, music and being beside the water. Second, I knew I wanted the event to include a storytelling session and a collaborative art exercise because both components encourage conversation, youth to express themselves creatively, and working together collaboratively as a team. The event began with the storytelling session and presentations from a few alumni about their projects, followed by a break for snow cones and then wrapped up with graffiti art painting. Multiple impact partners including Apathy is Boring, *Chantiers Jeunesse* and RCJEQ attended the event to show their support and contribute to the alumni discussion.



(Quinn Barrie-Watts sharing her experience as a grantee at Nouvelle Vague)

#Célébr'Action served as not only a useful platform to celebrate and embrace alumni challenges and successes youth face when participating in leadership initiatives. For example, all of the alumni who presented about their community projects talked about the power of resilience and adaptability. It was consistently noted that unexpected challenges are inevitably going to arise, but it is how you handle them that will make all the difference. This community engagement was also beneficial to my research because it gave me the opportunity to hear stories and experiences on a one-on-one level and in a group setting.

Given that #Célébr'Action was held in a public space, members of the community that were not associated with TakingITGlobal or SCSC could listen or participate. Roughly 40 people were directly impacted by #Célébr'Action throughout the duration of the day. Many attendees came after work and participated in the graffiti art session, which can be viewed at *Nouvelle Vague!*

## QUOTES



(The final art projects from the graffiti art session)

*“I have become more of a risk taker and believe in myself and my capabilities. It’s really amazing to have an idea and see it transform into something concrete.” - Priya, SCSC Fellow and #RisingYouth Grantee*

*“Through my project I could develop a lot of leadership and planning skills, it allowed me to develop a really big network which lead me to meet so many people that made me grow as a person.” - Anjelika, #RisingYouth Alumni*

*“This opportunity has allowed me to learn how to build partnerships and long-lasting relationships. Collaborating with community partners is really amazing because they have so much knowledge that can educate all of us. These relationships are really valuable and important.” Lavanya, SCSC Fellow and #RisingYouth Grantee*