

## Teen Advocate Jayson McCoy Spoke at “Creating Space, Taking Space”



***Panelists at “Creating Space, Taking Space”: (l-r) Finn Schubert from getLARC, Jayson McCoy from PPNYC, Peter Serrano from PPNYC, and Colin Adamo from Advocates for Youth***

Jayson McCoy, a PPNYC Teen Advocate, and Peter Serrano, PPNYC’s Associate Director of Youth Programs, had central roles in “Creating Space, Taking Space” in 2015, a lively panel discussion at Baruch College on the experiences and role of men in the movements for reproductive health, rights, and justice and gender equity. The moderator and panelists led brilliant conversations about how men can be feminists, challenges to including men in sexual and reproductive health education efforts, and the impact of gender norms in these movements and in their own lives.

Jayson explained that a PPNYC “Making Proud Choices” workshop inspired him to become a peer educator to help him and his friends make smart choices. "I go to an all-boy school and people talk about sex, but they're not being safe," Jayson said, explaining why he's a peer educator and why he makes sure all his friends know he can help them get condoms.

"It's important that males are involved because everyone needs to learn about their sexual health so they're not putting themselves or their partners at risk," Jayson said.

"Responsibility is predicated on knowledge. The only way you can do something is if you know the facts."

Jayson and other Teen Advocates created a PSA video called [Be There](#) on how men can support reproductive health care decisions. Jayson helped write the script and cast roles. "The PSA shows how males can be involved in one way or another -- whether it's emotional, just being there, or reminding your partner to take her pill if she's on it. This all

correlates with the fact that males can be feminists -- this is another way of showing support."

Peter spoke about what kinds of programs are ideal for bringing more men into these movements. "There need to be more realistic, holistic styles of education for men, like our Teen Advocates. There are activities that focus on men but rarely on a significant enough scale," Peter said.

One barrier he sees to involving more men in these movements is that many young men of color are not able to meet basic needs like safety and security in some communities of New York City. Disproportionately high incarceration rates, violence, and poverty add to the stress of young men of color. Meeting these needs must be a priority.

More than 175 people, including at least one fraternity, attended "Creating Space, Taking Space," and Jayson and Peter look forward to continuing this ongoing education and conversation about gender identity and masculinity.