

Tompkins Youth Rally for their Future

March 31, 2011

About 200 students from central New York will gather in Ithaca on Saturday for the Youth Power Summit.

Organized by students from Lehman Alternative Community School, New Roots Charter School, Ithaca High School, Dryden High School, Ithaca College and Cornell University, the summit is free and scheduled for 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Holiday Inn. The goal is to empower youth in the community, said organizing team member and Ithaca High School senior Ariana Shapiro.

"We want to bring youth together to network with each other and get excited and eager to work on issues like climate change, local food, social justice, green economy and activism," she said. "The whole day will be a really powerful experience and a great learning experience."

The summit is open primarily to high school and college students, Shapiro said, but some middle school students will be present, as well. There will be workshops, presentations and action planning sessions. Workshops will be focused on local food, social justice, political activism, hydraulic fracturing and energy efficiency.

In addition, a panel of local young elected officials, including Ithaca City Council members Svante Myrick and Eddie Rooker, Tompkins County Legislator Nathan Shinagawa, Caroline Town Councilmember Dominic

Frongillo and Binghamton City Councilmember Lea Webb, will discuss their experiences in office.

"I think it is terrific that these young people are taking this power into their hands," Myrick said. "To see them so engaged and energetic is terrific. I couldn't be more impressed by what they have put together."

At the end of the day, participants will march to the Tompkins County Courthouse to deliver a petition asking that all politically elected bodies in the county agree to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050, said Shapiro.

The event is being funded through grants the students applied for, she said. The group has received more than \$1,000 from the Haro Foundation and the Lansing Focus on Community and Understanding Service grant sponsored by the United Way, Shapiro said.

"The emphasis is all about empowering youth instead of talking at them," Shapiro said. "Young people will lead the event and inspire one another."

To register visit tinyurl.com/youthpowersummit.