

The Listen Up Project presents:

BLACK VOICES *of Vermont*



FEATURING



**What's it like to be a teenager in Vermont right now?
How does your racial identity impact your experience?**

Rae: I've had my share of racism towards me. Growing up I was either the only black kid in the class were the only black kid in the entire school. It got to a point where I became used to it. Being a black teenager in Vermont can be a bit challenging as there is very little diversity here. When I meet a person of color, they are either adopted or biracial, which is absolutely OK, it's just that I've never seen a Black family here in Vermont.

What does centering and celebrating Blackness mean to you?

Rae: I don't really celebrate Black history month. I guess I never understood why we as black people have one month to celebrate each other when there are people from the past world were celebrated for decades. Martin Luther King Jr. only has one day a year to be recognized and it goes right back to normal.

Who are your role models? From whom do you draw strength?

Rae: I think my strong influence would be my mom. My mom is an educator, yoga teacher. She has done so much in her life. The things that she has created for herself are truly inspiring to/for me and I aspire to be just like her.

What can the state of Vermont do to actively support young Black Vermonters?

Rae: I feel that Vermont could be more educated. [Vermont] needs to be more aware of Black Lives Matter by actually doing something about than just making a trend

What are some of your passions? What do you care about most right now?

Rae: My passions are art, singing, equality, family, fairness, and my cat Lily. I have great commitment and dedication to my schoolwork, such as art and community service. The thing I currently care most about is working toward my career. I want to be a social worker. My mom, my teachers, my cat Lily, my siblings and my boyfriend are what keeps me going.

This is a production of **The Listen Up Project** — An original musical based on the lives of VT teens

For more information go to www.listenupvt.org

