

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



## Organization Spotlight: *Lyé Creative*

### ***Amplifying Voices: Ariel Reyes Antuan on Equity, Culture, and Community***

Lyé Creative is a social enterprise dedicated to building equitable food systems where every voice is valued. Through strong relationships with small-scale farmers and the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, Lyé provides nutrient-dense, culturally relevant food to diverse communities. Lyé's work also includes capacity-building, land-based learning, and equity-focused policy development to support inclusive community investment. They prioritize collaboration with historically marginalized groups, including people of African descent, Indigenous urban residents, single parents, seniors, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, and those facing systemic barriers.



Ariel Reyes Antuan is the co-founder of Lyé, and a proud father of three Maya, Zyllo, and Zemi and brings his deep appreciation for family, culture, and history into every aspect of his life. Through his experiences, Ariel shares profound insights on the intersections of identity, resilience, and cultural preservation.

In this conversation, Ariel will reflect on his roots, the significance of honoring Black history and heritage, and the powerful ways in which food, family, and community connect us across time and space.

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## *Key Takeaways and Insights to Highlight*

### Personal Journey:

Ariel's journey is a powerful testament to resilience and the pursuit of cultural preservation amidst the challenges of the diaspora. Coming from a background deeply rooted in the traditions and landscapes of their home country, Ariel faced the dual struggle of adapting to a new life in a different land while holding on to the rich cultural heritage that shaped their identity.

Navigating systemic barriers as part of a diasporic community, Ariel has worked tirelessly to create spaces where cultural values are celebrated, especially through food. Food, for Ariel, is not just sustenance it's a connection to ancestry, history, and the land.

*"Food allows us to survive, but also to tell the story of who we are, where we come from, and how we've adapted to change,"* Ariel reflects.

Their experience in fostering community engagement through food and cultural exchanges serves as a means of celebrating survival, adaptation, and the beauty of a shared heritage.

### Key Messages:

Ariel's message on equity and inclusion is rooted in the idea that cultural safety is crucial for creating inclusive, thriving communities. Through their work, they've highlighted the importance of addressing historical inequities and advocating for greater representation and support for diasporic communities, particularly those who have been marginalized.

*"Acknowledging the reality of colonialism and how it impacts our food systems and our communities is the first step toward building a better future,"* Ariel says.

They advocate for a reimagined relationship with food one that not only celebrates the diverse cultures within a community but also challenges the historical structures that often exclude or erase these cultures. Ariel's message overall is true equity involves recognizing the intersections of food, culture, and systemic oppression, and actively working to create spaces where all cultures feel valued and safe.

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### Actionable Insights:

February offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the themes of Black History Month and take action toward greater cultural understanding and food justice. Ariel emphasizes that one of the most powerful ways to engage is by supporting Black-led organizations and local initiatives that focus on cultural preservation and food sovereignty.

***“Don’t just attend cultural events learn from them. Understand the struggles and triumphs behind the food, the stories, and the people. Supporting Black-led organizations means investing in communities that have long been denied the resources and recognition they deserve,”*** Ariel advises.

For those looking to make a direct impact, Ariel suggests participating in food justice initiatives, such as supporting community gardens, purchasing from local Black-owned food businesses, or organizing food drives that support families from marginalized communities. These actions not only provide tangible support but also create meaningful connections between diverse communities.

### Connection to Food, Culture, or Community:

Food has always been a central pillar in Ariel's narrative, not only as a means of sustenance but as a living archive of culture. Ariel's work reminds us that food is a bridge a connector between generations, a vehicle for storytelling, and a powerful tool for activism.

***“Our food tells our stories. It’s how we remember, how we share, and how we come together,”*** Ariel shares.

They emphasize that food systems are deeply interconnected with cultural identity and community-building. In February, the celebration of Black History Month is not only a moment to reflect on history but also an opportunity to embrace and share the stories that shape our collective future. Ariel suggests to nurture connections through food, create spaces for cultural sharing, and always acknowledge the land that sustains us.