



**Kenosha County Youth in Governance**  
 19600 – 75<sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 550  
 Bristol, WI 53104  
 262-857-1945  
 (FAX) 262-857-1998

# 2011 -2012 ANNUAL REPORT

## BACKGROUND

Youth leadership development is critical in building civic capacity and long-term community sustainability in Kenosha County. Programs that teach useful skills and build the self-confidence of young people ensure capable, effective leaders for the next generation. Data from a 2006 Kenosha County *Search Institute* survey documented that only 23% of youth perceive that their community values youth and only 27% believe that youth are given useful roles in the community. These results were among the lowest of all the assets measured and were lower than similar assets measured at a national level. In direct response to these survey results, the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors created the Kenosha County Youth In Governance (YIG) program in 2007. The purpose of the Youth In Governance program is to create a model of youth empowerment within Kenosha County, through direct participation in local government. The overall goal is to bring the youth voice to community issues and concerns while fostering the development of confident, independent, and motivated youth leaders.

## NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Nomination forms for the 2011 – 2012 Youth In Governance program were distributed to all twelve (12) public and private high schools in Kenosha County. Of these twelve (12), nine (9) high schools nominated a total of 186 youth to participate in the program. Of the 186 nominees that were mailed an application and reference form, 37 completed applications and 26 were granted interviews. Of the 26 interviewed, the names of 14 individuals were forwarded to Kenosha County Board Chairman Molinaro for official appointment to a Kenosha County Board Committee. For specific nomination and selection statistics please see TABLE A.

Name of High School	Number of Nominations	Number of Applications	Invited to Interview	Number Selected
Bradford	26	9	7	2
Christian Life	7	1	1	0
Harborside Academy	9	4	2	1
Hillcrest	0	0	0	0
Indian Trail Academy	17	3	2	2
Lakeview Technology	0	0	0	0
Reuther	1	0	0	0
Shoreland Lutheran	0	0	0	0
St. Joseph Catholic	5	4	3	1
Tremper High	41	6	5	4
Westosha Central	64	8	5	4
Wilmot	9	2	1	0
Other – Home School	7	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>

**TABLE A**



Cole Andrekas  
Judiciary and Law



Dustin Beth  
Public Works  
and Facilities



Trina Capelli  
Planning, Development and  
Extension Education



Christina Dalton  
Public Works  
and Facilities



Jasmine Galindo  
Human Services



Kate Gerou  
Human Services



Gurlyn Grewal  
Joint Services



Megan Jekot  
Executive



Aamir Kadri  
Finance and Administration



Abbey McDonald  
Judiciary and Law



Christina Rende  
Executive



Paige Schultz  
Finance and Administration



Mia Williams  
Joint Services

**Kenosha County  
Youth In Governance Members  
2011 – 2012**



Heather Zons  
Planning, Development and  
Extension Education

## EVALUATION AND IMPACT

Near the end of their term, all Youth In Governance members were given the opportunity to complete a retrospective evaluation. Quantitative information about civic engagement and leadership skill development are highlighted in TABLE B and TABLE C. Qualitative information is also shared through direct quotes from youth in response to three specific questions.

N = 12 of 14 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	% of Youth Reporting No Change	% of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Change	% of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Change
I am knowledgeable about Kenosha County Government	8%	25%	67%
I am aware of local issues that affect Kenosha County	0%	67%	33%
My opinion can make a difference in the community	25%	33%	42%
I am interested in politics	50%	42%	8%
I have a useful role in the community	25%	67%	8%
I feel a strong connection to Kenosha County	25%	33%	42%

TABLE B

N = 12 of 14 LEADERSHIP SKILLS	% of Youth Reporting No Change	% of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Change	% of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Change
I can participate in group discussions with adults	25%	67%	8%
I can speak confidently before a group of adults	17%	75%	8%
I can see issues from multiple perspectives	33%	50%	17%
I can share new ideas with others	58%	33%	8%
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues	8%	58%	33%
I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County	17%	25%	58%

TABLE C

### QUESTION #1

**One goal of the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program is to create an environment that is conducive to the positive development of youth voice and youth engagement. Do you feel the YIG program accomplished this goal? Why?**

“Yes, during the meetings, the only questions I had were usually answered quickly, because each subject was explained thoroughly and clearly. I was able to understand what was being discussed, and I was always offered a chance to ask questions or voice my vote.” - *Cole Andrekus*



“I do feel that the YIG program accomplished this because I always felt that I was involved, included, and important. I think this really helps to ensure that the youth has a positive experience. I was always encouraged to speak up and share my thoughts and that helped me to develop my voice a lot. It made me want to be more engaged.” - *Trina Capelli*

“Yes, because I learned more about working with people who have other ideas than you.” - *Dustin Beth*

“Yes, I strongly feel that YIG accomplished that goal. I now feel that I have a voice within my community and that I can make a difference. I feel more comfortable speaking in front of a group of professionals and feel more open to share my ideas and thoughts.” - *Christina Dalton*

## QUESTION #2

Another goal of the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program is that the program would provide youth with skills, knowledge and experiences to prepare them for future leadership opportunities. Do you feel the YIG program accomplished this goal? Why?

“Absolutely, I believe YIG has given me a great opportunity to expand my knowledge and skills. The confidence it has given me has made me more prepared for my future.” - *Abbey McDonald*

“The YIG program has made me more confident when speaking in front of adults and my peers. Also, it has provided me with the knowledge necessary to approach local government issues.” - *Gurlyn Grewal*

“Yes, YIG accomplished this goal. I feel I now have more effective communication skills and a greater understanding of our political system. YIG has helped me explore my community and develop lifelong skills.” - *Kate Gerou*

“By teaching me to be more open and voice what I believe, the program helped me succeed as a better leader, as all good leaders must speak and be rather good at it. Also, I know now that I feel more comfortable in social leadership positions; this is something I would, after my YIG experience, like to take on in the years to come.” - *Aamir Kadri*

“Yes, I gained a lot of confidence in the presence of esteemed adults in this program.” - *Heather Zons*

## QUESTION #3

What has been the most important thing you have gained from participation in the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program?

“The most important thing I have gained from my participation in the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program is the skill of seeing issues from multiple perspectives. I am now able to respectfully voice my opinion while still listening to and taking others into consideration. I am now able to apply this valuable skill to my college experience in applying to a discussion based class called the American Conversation. It has been an amazing two years! Thank you for this experience. I will be taking everything I have learned with me to college!” - *Megan Jekot*

“I have gained a tremendous amount of respect for all elected officials, both in Kenosha County and beyond. Their jobs are by no means easy and often take up large amounts of their personal time; however, they keep coming back. No matter if I agreed with a supervisor’s opinion or not, I was always awed by the passion with which they spoke and the dedication which they display.” - *Christina Rende*

“The most important thing that I have gained from participation in Kenosha County Youth In Governance is that I now feel a stronger connection to Kenosha County and I can now talk knowledgeably with adults about local issues. I feel that I now know a lot more about how government is run, especially at the local level. I now have formed opinions about government and since I am of voting age, I feel that having opinions at this age is very important. I now feel that I have an important role in my community, and look forward to staying in politics in my near future.” - *Paige Schultz*

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**UW**  
**Extension**  
**Kenosha County**



*Kenosha County Youth In Governance is a program of Kenosha County UW-Extension in partnership with the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors. University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.*