



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

2010 -2011 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 form for the 2010 – 2011 Youth In Governance program were distributed to all twelve (12) public and private high schools in Kenosha County. Of these twelve (12), eight (8) high schools nominated a total of 132 youth to participate in the program. Of the 132 nominees that were mailed an application and reference form, 36 completed applications and 27 were granted interviews. Of the 27 interviewed, the names of 18 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	2	2	2	2
Christian Life	5	1	1	1
Harborside Academy	3	2	2	1
Hillcrest	0	0	0	0
Indian Trail Academy	16	2	2	2
Lakeview Technology	5	0	0	0
Reuther	0	0	0	0
Shoreland Lutheran	0	0	0	0
St. Joseph Catholic	1	1	1	0
Tremper High	46	19	15	8
Westosha Central	53	9	4	4
Wilmot	0	0	0	0
Other – Home School	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	132	36	27	18

TABLE A

Kenosha County Youth In Governance Members

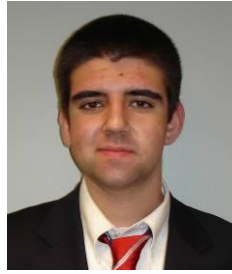
2010 – 2011



Stephanie Althoff
Finance



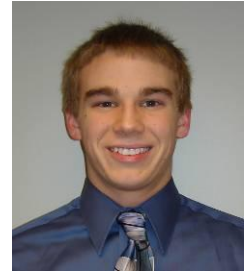
Dustin Beth
Legislative



David Capelli
Finance



Jenna Ciszewski
Administration



Tyler Derginer
Land Use



Elizabeth Dumez
Highway & Parks



Katherine Dumez
Joint Services



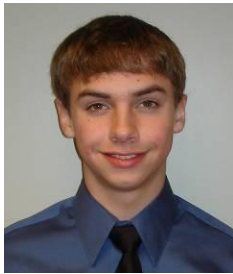
Haley Egle
Joint Services



Jasmine Galindo
Building & Grounds



Kate Gerou
Building & Grounds



Kyle Henry
Land Use



Megan Jekot
Human Services



Ryan Joseph
Human Services



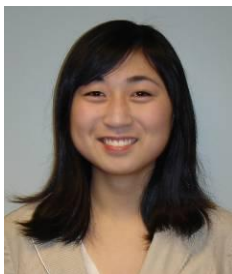
Emily Kenney
Judiciary & Law



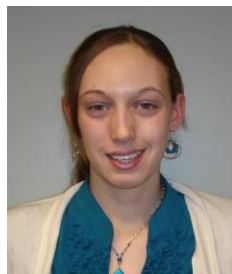
Matthew Mleczo
Extension Education



Jacob Trione
Highway & Parks



Alice Wei
Judiciary & Law



Kathie Yarger
Administration



Rachel Zalaznik
Legislative



Heather Zons
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 = 16 of 20 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	12%	88%	56%
I am aware of local issues that affect Kenosha County	31%	69%	38%
My opinion can make a difference in the community	50%	50%	13%
I am interested in politics	50%	50%	6%
I have a useful role in the community	25%	75%	6%
I feel a strong connection to Kenosha County	37%	63%	31%

TABLE B

N = 16 of 20 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	44%	56%	6%
I can speak confidently before a group of adults	44%	56%	6%
I can see issues from multiple perspectives	56%	44%	31%
I can share new ideas with others	62%	38%	0%
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues	25%	75%	25%
I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County	31%	69%	31%

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?

“I do feel the Youth in Governance program has accomplished this environment; at least, from my point of view. It provides a useful and thoughtful way for people of my age to find out about Kenosha government and for us to access our right to speak up early on. I doubt I would be able to find a place that does this somewhere else.” - *Jasmine Galindo*

“Absolutely, YIG gives a voice to youth both in a professional, adult setting but also in a government setting. It immensely strengthens leadership skills as well.” - *Stephanie Althoff*

“As a current member of the program, my voice is heard and taken into consideration. My fellow committee members promote my participation during meetings, which allows me to feel more comfortable and mature. I feel that I am able to develop into a knowledgeable young adult because of how much I learn and how I am treated during my meetings. My fellow committee members treat me with the highest level of respect.” - *Megan Jekot*

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?

“Yes, I feel that YIG accomplished its goal. This is because it helped me feel that my opinions mattered, and that I should be able to participate intelligently in adult discussions. Part of that includes the ability to be able to speak my opinions, and I’m extremely grateful for that.” - *Ryan Joseph*



“I believe working in a group is an invaluable skill to learn and every Youth in Governance member improves in that aspect. Being part of a committee, Youth in Governance members learn how to conduct meetings, how to express cogent ideas, how to view issues from a variety of perspectives, and how to become a better public speaker. These skills aren’t unique to a single career; these are life skills that will definitely pay off down the road.” - *Matt Mlwecko*

“I feel YIG accomplished this goal. I have improved my verbal and questioning skills. I feel more confident talking to adults and politicians, because I have now worked with them and have experienced the law process firsthand.” - *Kate Gerou*

QUESTION #3

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

“Just the ability to understand what’s going on in county government, my county! Everything we hear on the news about Washington and Madison effects us at the county level too. I feel like I’m in the loop when it comes to government now.” - *Katie Yarger*

“The most important thing the Youth in Governance has given to me is a greater connection to and awareness of Kenosha County and its units of government, functions, and structure. It has given me an enhanced understanding of the operation of government on the local and county level, which is ultimately more important to the community.” - *Tyler Derginer*

“The most important thing is definitely the fact that I now know how much the leadership of Kenosha truly works for the citizens of the county. It is so great knowing that I have been living in a place that is governed by leaders who truly care about their constituents.” - *Alice Wei*

“Knowledge! From the specific issues facing the board to national issues, I really learned how to apply what I’m learning at school to what I learn in board meetings.” - *Haley Egle*

“YIG has taught me to be a more active member of the Kenosha community. It has opened my eyes to the decisions being made that affect the daily life of members in the community, including myself. I feel less apathetic and more involved in my own life and in my future. I have the power to make a difference, and try to stay updated on current events.” - *Jenna Ciszewski*

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