



Kenosha County Youth in Governance
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2016-2017 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 2016 – 2017 Youth In Governance program were distributed to all thirteen (13) public and private high schools in Kenosha County. Of these thirteen (13), eleven (11) high schools nominated a total of 172 youth to participate in the program. Of the 172 nominees that were mailed an application and reference form, 42 completed applications, and 24 were granted interviews. Of the 24 interviewed, the names of 14 individuals were forwarded to Kenosha County Board Chairman Molinaro for official appointment to a Kenosha County Board Committee. Please see TABLE A for specific nomination and selection statistics.

Name of High School	Number of Nominations	Number of Applications	Invited to Interview	Selected as YIG Participant
Bradford	9	1	1	1
Catholic Central	4	2	2	2
Christian Life	5	0	0	0
Harborside Academy	19	4	2	1
Indian Trail Academy	52	11	4	1
Kenosha Military Academy	1	1	1	1
Lakeview Technology	12	7	6	2
Reuther	1	0	0	0
St. Joseph Catholic	0	0	0	0
Shoreland Lutheran	0	0	0	0
Tremper	41	8	4	2
Westosha Central	22	7	4	4
Wilmot	1	1	0	0
Nominated by Others	5	0	0	0
TOTAL	172	42	24	14

TABLE A

Kenosha County Youth In Governance Members 2016 – 2017



Felix Desimoni
Planning,
Development &
Extension Education

Henry Dutkiewicz
Finance &
Administration

Alexandra Harrah
Legislative

Emma Heller-
Cavener
Legislative

Michael Hertel
Public Works &
Facilities

Morgan Kolimaga
Joint Services



Andrew Koroly
Finance &
Administration

Madelyn Lacroix
Judiciary & Law

Tyler McCarthy
Human Services

Mikelle Miles
Planning,
Development &
Extension Education

Katie Pollock
Joint Services

Sydney Robson
Judiciary & Law



Andrew
Romanowski
Public Works &
Facilities

Hannah Sorensen
Human Services

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 = 6 of 14	# of Youth Reporting No Change	# of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Change	# of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Change
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT			
I am knowledgeable about Kenosha County Government	1	2	3
I am aware of local issues that affect Kenosha County	1	3	2
My opinion can make a difference in the community	2	1	3
I am interested in politics	4	2	0
I have a useful role in the community	1	3	2
I feel a strong connection to Kenosha County	0	4	2

TABLE B

N = 6 of 14	# of Youth Reporting No Change	# of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Change	# of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Change
LEADERSHIP SKILLS			
I can participate in group discussions with adults	4	2	0
I can speak confidently before a group of adults	2	4	0
I can see issues from multiple perspectives	4	2	0
I can share new ideas with others	3	3	0
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues	2	2	2
I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County	1	2	3

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 believe the YIG program accomplished this goal as I feel as though I have a voice in the way my community is ran. By being able to hear and share ideas with the committee members, I obtained new perspectives and felt more engaged in the county.”

“I feel that the environment was very positive and helped me learn about the issues we covered. I feel that the environment helped me be confident and more open to share my ideas.”

“Yes, the program has definitely accomplished their goal of making an environment for the youth voice to be heard. Because I am more comfortable with my own ideas and presenting them in a confident way, they have accomplished their goal of making a comfortable and conducive program for the youth to be heard.”



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?

“I feel as though YIG accomplished this goal as it provided members with the ability to see others take leadership roles. I have witnessed many cases in which a board member has taken a leadership position and it has been invaluable as it has given me experience I can use when I take a leadership position. Coming into the program, I felt as though I was leader, but the program definitely furthered my abilities as a leader.”

“I feel that I have received knowledge that will help me with future leadership skills because I have learned more information about new and important topics.”

“Yes, I feel that the YIG program has accomplished the goal of providing the youth with useful skills and prepare them for future leadership opportunities. The condition that made the program so effective and helpful was the real world interactions that we, as youth, got to experience and that is a very valuable skill that does not come often.”



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 would be the idea that every person in the county, country, world, etc. has a voice. No matter what opinion a person has, it is valuable in that it diversifies perspectives and moves society forward as we are able to improve our critical thinking abilities.”

“I have gained confidence and communication skills from YIG. I believe that these skills will be crucial for my future career as a medical researcher.”

“The most important thing that I have gained from participating in the YIG program is how to listen to other people's opinions in a fair manner. Once everyone has said what they need to say, then that is the time where the solution can be worked out. If the solution is not beneficial to the citizens apart of the community, they won't be happy. Being fair to all individuals is also skill that I have gained from this program.”



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.