

YOUTH COMMISSION STAFF E-NEWS

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Greetings!

Welcome to the first edition of the **Youth Commission Staff E-News** brought to you by the Collaborative Governance Initiative at the Institute for Local Government, with the generous support of the Surdna Foundation.

We hope that this tri-annual e-newsletter will provide useful information to help strengthen your city or county youth commission or council. Each issue will feature **new resources, program ideas, strategies, success stories** and more.

You can forward this newsletter to youth commissioners or council members with the "Forward email" link below.

CGI's Youth Engagement Web Pages



The Collaborative Governance Initiative's [Youth Engagement Webpages](#) offers a directory of California city and county youth commissions and youth advisory councils, a compendium of resources for youth commission staff and volunteers, case stories of youth engagement, and a summary from

our recent online dialogue on ways that youth commissions can involve more youth and have a greater impact on public policy.

Send us your youth commission or council stories, and we will add them to our website and/or e-newsletter as space allows.

Tips on Forming a Youth Commission or Council

- [Youth Commissions and Councils Promote Leadership and Participation](#) - this article from the September 2008 issue of *Western City* magazine includes commission success stories and key elements of successful youth commissions.

- [Building Effective Youth Councils: A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy-Making](#) is available from the Forum for Youth Investment (www.forumfyi.org).
- As part of a presentation for mayors and city council members at a 2007 League of California Cities conference, Leslie Fritz at the California Park and Recreation Society authored a useful and concise four-page tip sheet, *Six Action Steps to Forming a Youth Commission or Youth Advisory Council*, available [HERE](#).

2 Stories About Youth Commissions in California

Here are links to two articles about youth commissions from the September issue of *Western City* magazine.

[Claremont's Teen Committee Helps Develop Transportation Solution](#)

[Lancaster Gives Teens a Voice in Local Government](#)



Promoting Health Insurance for Children and Youth



Is your community's youth commission interested in learning more about affordable health insurance options for children and youth of working families? Does your city or county youth commission want to be part of something exciting to help children in your community? Then check out the Communities for Healthy Kids (CHK) website at www.ca-ilg.org/chk. CHK staff members are available to work with you and your agency staff to find ways to get the word out to families with eligible children. CHK is a program of the Institute for Local Government designed to increase the number of kids enrolled in no- or low-cost health insurance offered by Medi-Cal, the Healthy Families program or Healthy Kids program. For information about CHK, please contact Wendy Chang at wchang@ca-ilg.org or call (916) 658-8298.

DoRight Leadership Corps Involves Youth in Municipal Sustainability Assessment

Youth Partnerships Empower Municipal Sustainability Efforts

On June 3, 2008, Madeleine Skaller, 15, sat before the Town Board in Fishkill, New York, describing how she and several other youth "consultants" from the Brewster NY chapter of the DoRight Leadership Corps (DLC) would conduct their sustainability assessment of the municipal center and police station. Supervisors moved from curiosity to amazement as the Brewster High School freshman described the scope of the assessment - energy use, waste management, water, chemicals, landscaping, green building features, procurement - and an employee awareness program to motivate employees to reduce their footprints in their daily lives. She noted how DoRight "clients" were eligible for the "Plant Saver" award if they reached targeted DoRight standards, and that the Brewster chapter of the DLC had assessed over 50 businesses in Brewster to date, including the Putnam Hospital and the Queens Botanical Garden, a soon to be certified platinum LEED building. DLC youth also engaged political leaders and spearheaded public relations efforts, she explained. Fishkill Town Councilman Bob LaColla found Madeleine's presentation "amazingly professional."

[Read More Here](#)

New Action Kit to Help Cities Create Youth Master Plans

The YEF (Youth, Education and Families) Institute at the National League of California Cities has published a new action kit for municipal leaders, [Creating a Youth Master Plan](#).

This kit offers tips and advice for cities seeking to develop a shared framework and improve coordination of services and opportunities for children and youth. Based on the diverse experiences of cities that have created such plans, the ideas and examples it contains are designed to help local agency and school leaders collaborate with each other, young people, community organizations and other residents to develop a comprehensive youth agenda.

Rock the Vote This November 4th



You can be a part of making 2008 the year of the young voter - and Rock the Vote has the tools to help you get your friends and your community involved.

Go to [Rock the Vote](#) and check out all the tools to help you organize a street team in your community, get your friends and classmates registered to vote, and mobilize voters to the polls on Election Day.

The first step is to sign up for a Rock the Vote online voter registration tool - a free, easy-to-use widget that anyone can put on his or her webpage, blog, or social network page, and register voters right away. Sign up [HERE](#) for it and then get all your friends to register! Deadlines are coming up soon in California - **make sure everyone you know is registered to vote before the deadline of Monday, October 20th.**

For more information contact Kat at kat@rockthevote.com.

18 in 08: Mobilize the Polls Program



Mobilize the Polls is an effort to give young people the opportunity to contribute to their fellow citizens' understanding and access to the democratic process by volunteering to be a pollworker. If you or someone you know are between the ages of 18 and 30 and interested in contributing your familiarity with computer technology as a poll worker please make sure you are registered to vote and then email Kaelan@mobilize.org with your name, Congressional district, and state.

New Toolkit for Engaging Youth in Local Government

The Association of Idaho Cities produced *Youth Engagement and Participation in Local Government: A Toolkit for Municipal Leaders*. This toolkit provides a broad range of information and resources on how to develop a mayor's youth advisory council, other strategies for engaging youth in local government, funding opportunities, related research findings, and links to youth council websites. For more information contact Mandy De Castro at mdecastro@idahocities.org.

Involving Youth in Community Decision Making

Involving Youth in Community Decision Making

by James P. Peck, Director, Research & Information Management

National League of Cities (NLC) Office of Youth Participation staffers Leon Andrews and Kate Sandel this summer addressed Maryland municipal officials on involving youth in local government.

Both speakers stressed the value of engaging youth in community activities. It helps develop young minds by providing work experience, teaching new sets of skills, promoting responsibility, bolstering confidence, empowering them and creating bonds with other youth and adult leaders. Youth who participate in community activities are also less likely to become involved in risky behavior or criminal conduct. Finally, the unique perspective that young people offer on issues affecting a community enhances decision-making when their voices are solicited, heard and considered.

[Read More Here](#)

"Save Me a Spot in College" Scholarship Contest

Help promote the "Save Me a Spot in College" Scholarship Contest and encourage youth on their path to higher education! The contest kicks off November 1st, 2008, and the **deadline to submit entries is March 15th, 2009**. Students participating in the Contest will learn about college, help promote college participation among their peers, and make sure state leaders are informed about the importance of college access and success. This scholarship contest invites California students in 6th through 12th grade to submit a written word, poster or television ad answering the questions, "Why should California leaders save you and your peers a spot in college?" **Over 200 students across California will share a total of \$125,000 in scholarship awards!** To learn more about the scholarship contest details and entry information please go to www.collegecampaign.org/contest or call 1-800-459-9586.

Survey Explores Link Between Video Game Playing and Civic Engagement

The first national survey of its kind finds that virtually all American teens play computer, console, or cell phone games and that the gaming experience is rich and varied, with a significant amount of social interaction and potential for civic engagement. The survey was conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, an initiative of the Pew Research Center, and was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The primary findings in the survey of 1,102 youth ages 12-17 include:

- 97% of American teens ages 12-17 play some kind of video game
- 99% of boys say they are gamers and 94% of girls report that they play games
- 76% of gaming teens play games with others at least some of the time
- 65% of gaming teens play with others in the same room

For a full report please visit [Survey](#).

Free Copies of *What We Can't Tell You*

Next generation press is moving their warehouse and offering cases of 40 copies of *What We Can't Tell You: Teenagers Talk to the Adults in Their Lives*. for **free** if you pay the \$20 shipping. In this book, 60 diverse teenagers spoke out candidly about what they needed from parents and other close adults.

To read more about What We Can't Tell You, including excerpts of the kids' voices, click on this link: <http://www.nextgenerationpress.org/titles/whatwecant.html>.

To order copies send your mailing information to info@nextgenerationpress.org.

Flint Michigan Cracks Down on Saggy Pants Wearers

Here is a news story from Flint, Michigan that may be of interest to teens who favor baggy trousers or care about their constitutional rights: <http://abclocal.go.com/wjrt/story?section=news/local&id=6283079>.

We want the **Youth Commission Staff E-News** to be useful to you! If you have an item for the next e-newsletter, please send it to us. If there are resources you would like us to highlight, please let us know. If there are topics you want to see covered, please tell us. **We want to help you support your youth commission or council.**

Please forward any ideas or resources to Carmen Pereira, Program Assistant, at cpereira@ca-ilg.org.

If you are not the current youth commission or council staff member, we would appreciate it if you would provide the contact information for or forward this email to the current staff member.

Again, if you think this e-newsletter would be useful to youth commissioners or others, please forward it to them using the "Forward email" link below.

Best wishes,

Terry Amsler, Program Director
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