



2007- 2008

Kansas City Youth Commission

Annual Report

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Kansas City Youth Commission is to unite Kansas City youth and build a bridge between youth and civic arenas. We aim to use our various committees to identify positive solutions and effectively address concerns and issues facing Kansas City's youth.

Vision:

We seek the unity of adult and youth through activities which promote equality and community. We implement measures which encourage civic duty, participation and awareness. Inclusion is a fundamental underlying value considered in all decisions and actions. To bridge the gap, we must first build the foundation.

Letter from the Chairman

For its last two terms—about a year and a half—the Kansas City Youth Commission has worked extensively to represent countless Kansas City youth by enacting resolutions, supporting and hosting events, and promoting initiatives to increase the advancement of youth from all districts. The commissioners, coming together in the spirit of unity for youth, have assisted with and created opportunities for youth they represent. From the Agenda KC Hiring Fairs and Leadership Conference, to the Youth Bus, National PAL Basketball Tournament, and even more works in progress, I am very proud of the impact the Youth Commission has on youth and their issues.

Exponential strides were made in the Youth Commission's last two terms, as the Commission continued to bridge the gap between our city government and the youth of Kansas City. Through events such as the Agenda KC Leadership Conferences, settings are provided for youth to collaborate and use their ideas for the betterment of their peers. Hiring fairs provided thousands of jobs and kept otherwise unoccupied youth productive over the summer. The opportunity afforded these youth is sure to stay with them for years to come. Other initiatives such as the Youth Bus and the National PAL Basketball Tournaments provide youth with safe transportation and recreational activities: two of the three main goals the Commission has set out to accomplish.

The growth and progression of an already prosperous Youth Commission is definitely foreseeable as the youth of Kansas City continue to give it what it needs—a motivating force and a voice. The Youth Commission is grateful and extremely excited to represent youth throughout Kansas City by working in coalition with both youth and governmental officials. We expect to continue to help youth flourish by utilizing their power and influence to ensure that our predecessors secure the future of our city's youth.

Gratefully Yours,

Hassan Williams, chairman

2007-2008 Kansas City Youth Commission

2007-2008 City of Kansas City, Missouri Youth Commissioners

Zendrix Berndt

Committee: Youth Sports and Recreation

District: 3

Goals: Provide the youth of Kansas City with three more positive programs in which to become involved; Create a life skill-enhancing activity

Selchia Cain

Committee: Health

District: 5

Goals: Promote health and sporting events through increased flyers, radio announcements and online resources; Combat teenage obesity with a Kansas City Youth Health Expo summer 2009

Rae'shel Crawford, vice chairwoman

Committee: Youth Justice

District: 5

Goals: Provide a place where youth can be active and safe; Give recognition to Kansas City's young achievers through the "Top 20 under 20" recognition platform

Jade Deloney

Committee: Neighborhoods and Community Service

District: 3

Goals: Create awareness about positive activities within the community through newspapers, TV and radio; Increase the youth attendance at activities by 15 percent

Jarrett Edwards

Committee: Media and Public Relations

District: 6

Goals: Increase the number of volunteers for events and projects by 20 percent; Support the youth of Kansas City in finding employment through employments fairs

Justin Grote, secretary

Committee: Youth Sports and Recreation

District: 2

Goals: Create a new look for the Youth Sports and Recreation Committee; Create three recreational activities for youth involvement

Mallory Hamilton, treasurer

Committee: Youth Employment

District: 1

Goals: Increase the number of Liberty High School students who participate in the Bright Futures Employment Fair by 5 percent

Tanisha Harris

Committee: Housing and Transportation

District: 5

Goals: Organize bi-weekly events that give youth and their families a chance to engage in the community

Alfred Massey, Jr.

Committee: Youth Sports and Recreation

District: 4

Goals: Gather 10 unemployed teens, find out why they are not employed, and help them obtain jobs; Rotate between five schools, giving presentations about why youth need to get involved with sports and other recreational activities, as well as become employed

Zachary McGowan

Committee: Community Service

District: 3

Goals: Have 3,000 or more Kansas City youth involved in National Global Youth Service Day;
Create three more opportunities for youth to clean up their neighborhoods and community

Alyssa Murfey

Committee: Media and Public Relations

District: 3

Goals: Develop a project that will have more creative focus on youth artistry for Kansas City youth; Lead or aid in the development of a project with a creative focus to inspire young urban artists

Daniel Patterson

Committee: Media and Public Relations

District: 3

Goals: Find three ACT preparation programs; Set up a mentorship program for youth released from the juvenile center

Ben Pepper

District: 1

Goals: Increase the number of youth from the first district at Youth Commission events by 10 percent

Halima Ramsey

Committee: Special Events and Projects

District: 3

Goals: Give 20 unconnected Kansas City youth the opportunity to attend the youth leadership conference and gain knowledge that will benefit them in their lives; Organize a writing contest so youth can have their voice heard in the "Youth Beat" magazine

Andrew Schofield

Committee: Special Events and Projects

District: 4

Goals: Create at least two more constructive programs for youth that educate and entertain them in order to make Kansas City a safer and more enjoyable place for youth to live; Advertise the existing community programs in three new ways to get the youth of Kansas City further involved in constructive activities without violence or drugs

D'Angela Sims

Committee: Youth Employment

District: 5

Goals: Increase the number of participants in the 4th Annual Bright Futures Hiring Fair by 20 percent; Increase the number of employers at the 4th Annual Bright Futures Hiring Fair by 15 percent; Promote more information about the hiring fair to corporations in Kansas City

Hassan Williams, Chairman

Committee:

District: 5

Goals: Make Kansas City accessible to youth by providing youth with three new opportunities to succeed and prosper; Create three more recreational outlets for youth to enjoy themselves safely

2007-2008 Youth Advisors

Cameron Coates

Derron Pickett

Victoria Willingham

2007-2008 Resolutions

- Ensure youth have the resources and tools necessary to not only take but succeed on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT).
- Make Kansas City a safer, more friendly place to live and visit
- Get youth excited about their personal health
- Develop youth artistry in Kansas City
- Encourage the bus system to maintain a \$10 per month bus pass for youth under the age of 21, in order to assist youth in getting to jobs and educational activities
- Encourage Voter Registration for eligible voters at all public high schools in order to get more youth involved in the political process both locally and nationally
- Encourage the creation of programs to assist homeless youth, and support existing programs, such as ReStart Inc, to make Kansas City a better place for people of all socioeconomic conditions
- Ensure that youth in Kansas City, across economic spectrums, have equal access to educational and career programs and opportunities
- Ensure the city is aware of programs designed to aid in the development of Kansas City youth and promote City support of those programs

Committees

Housing and Transportation Committee

The purpose of the Housing and Transportation Committee is to evaluate and address issues related to housing and transportation facing Kansas City's youth. The Committee will:

- Work with internal and external partners to identify housing and transportation resources available for Kansas City youth
- Inform Kansas City youth about those resources that are available

The Housing and Transportation Committee seeks to provide resources to which teens can turn. The committee aims to set-up programs that will inform homeless teenagers about resources available during a crisis period of homelessness.

Additionally, many teens throughout Kansas City are not aware of transportation options that are available in the metro area. A solution to this problem is to hold a transportation fair. In this transportation fair, the committee will give out pamphlets on both housing and transportation options for teens who are homeless as well as those needing information about how to get around the city.

Youth Employment Committee

The purpose of the Youth Employment Committee is to help youth explore career options and find short and long-term employment opportunities. The committee will:

- Identify and promote employment, career exploration and professional development opportunities for Kansas City youth
- Work with the public and private sectors to ensure Kansas City youth have year-round employment options.

The Youth Employment Committee is working with the Youth Advocacy office to organize the 4th Annual Bright Future Symposium Hiring Fair. This fair enables Kansas City youth to gain career readiness as well as personal and professional development.

Last year's Hiring Fair was a success by all measurable standards. In order to participate, youth from the ages of 14-25 filled out an application which was posted on the city's website. Each participant was encouraged to go on the Discover ACT website and complete a career assessment, which made youth more aware about what careers they might be interested in. Representatives from both the public and private sectors, along with the Youth Advocacy Office and Youth Commission, helped over 1,000 youth find employment opportunities.

The fair would not have been possible without the public/private partnerships developed to ensure its success. Through the joint efforts of Sprint, HR Block, the Full Employment Council and the City of Kansas City, the fair was a huge success. With these partnerships in place, the Youth Advocacy Office is confident the 2008 Hiring Fair will be an even greater success.

Public Health Committee

The purpose of the Public Health Committee is to address health-related issues amongst Kansas City's youth. The committee will:

- Ensure Kansas City youth are aware of health-related issues that impact them
- Work to provide youth with information that will aid them in either continuing, or developing, good health habits

The Public Health Committee is organizing a Health Expo, targeted at addressing the growing issue of obesity among young people throughout the Kansas City area. The Expo will inform youth and their families about obesity and the health issues that obesity can cause, such as diabetes, high cholesterol; heart disease and other problems. The committee would like to also address the issue of HIV and AIDS as they affect young people in Kansas City.

By addressing the issues above, the committee hopes to inform and promote a movement that will ignite and excite a change for health conditions in our city's youth.

Youth Justice and Education Committee

The purpose of the Youth Justice and Education Committee is to address issues regarding at-risk youth and youth in the juvenile justice system as well as issues of education amongst Kansas City's youth. The committee will:

-Work to establish short and long-term goals to address risk factors for Kansas City youth

The Youth Justice committee envisions using education to prevent youth from entering the juvenile system, as well as finding mentorship for those youth currently in the juvenile system.

The committee first seeks to set up a program that sends youth who have committed a crime to outlets other than the juvenile justice system. One idea is to have these offenders serve as advisors to the Kansas City Youth Commission in roles as advocates for community service. Doing this would give these youth a solid task and activity that would keep them out of trouble, provide them with teamwork and leadership skills, and ultimately, keep them out of the juvenile system.

The second step is to set up a mentoring program for troubled youth in the juvenile system where doctors, lawyers, and teachers go to juvenile centers and talk to youth about why they should get their life in order, and how they can have a successful life by making positive changes.

The committee is working to ensure Kansas City high school students are prepared to take the ACT exam and is currently researching resources available for youth to be better prepared for the exam. The committee seeks to promote these resources and make them available to all students in Kansas City.

Youth Sports and Recreation Committee

The purpose of the Youth Sports and Recreation Committee is to identify and promote safe and affordable recreation opportunities for all Kansas City residents. The committee will:

-Actively promote recreational activities that all Kansas City residents can participate in and enjoy

-Work to develop activities that youth can engage in

The Youth Sports and Recreation Committee has promoted and will continue to promote opportunities for Kansas City youth to remain active in both sports and other recreational opportunities throughout Kansas City. The committee will again help support and promote the Police Athletic League (PAL) national basketball tournament, scheduled for the summer of 2008 in Kansas City, the Sister Cities International Youth conference, also scheduled for 2008, and other events in the city.

The PAL national basketball tournament is a key event for youth in Kansas City to participate in as well as attend and support. The tournament draws over 1,000 youth from around the United States to Kansas City for five days of competition as well as rest and relaxation. The University of Missouri at Kansas City and Rockhurst University provide venues for the games, and local businesses provide lodging, dining and other needs for participants. The tournament also provides employment for local youth as scorekeepers and in other tournament related jobs. The committee realizes the great opportunity this event provides both to youth and to Kansas City as a whole, and is committed to the success of the tournament in 2008.

The committee is also working to let Kansas City's youth decide what people and places are the "Best of" the city, by organizing the 2007-2008 "Best of Kansas City" list. This list will let youth decide who and what make up the best of Kansas City in over 20 categories. The results will be presented in the spring edition of the Kansas City 'Youth Beat' magazine.

The Economic Impact of Teens in the United States, Kansas City and Why Youth Development Matters

According to 2006 United States Census Bureau estimates, approximately 81,794 people between the ages of 10 and 24 live in Kansas City. In that age range, residents in the 18 to 24 year-old demographic make up 38,515 (47.1 percent), with 32.2 percent holding a high-school diploma, 35.4 percent having some college or an associate's degree and 13.2 percent possessing a Bachelor's degree.

With 165,557 Kansas City wage-earning residents paying an average of \$49.90 per person, youth in Kansas City have a unique opportunity not only to help drive the city's economy with their dollars, but to continue driving the local economy as they acquire employment and/or higher education, adding to the number of wage earners generating tax dollars here in Kansas City. Residents between the ages of 10 and 24 make up roughly one-fifth of Kansas City's population. The City has an enormous opportunity to not only tap into the buying power of this group, but put policies and plans in place that ensure they continue to live, work and play in Kansas City. The Kansas City Youth Commission is committed to leading that effort and working with elected officials and City staff to make sure programs, policies and opportunities are available for Kansas City's youth.

Program Highlights

Youth Commission Mini-Grants

The Kansas City Youth Commission developed a philanthropy initiative to assist youth serving non-profit agencies with conducting small projects in the City of Kansas City. The Youth Commission's goal is to give mini-grants in the amount of \$1,000 to agencies that meet the requirements. Each project must be directed, implemented and evaluated by young people. The program impact has to address the needs of young people ages 8-25 in the following areas:

- Sports and Recreation
- Justice and Education
- Public Health
- Community Service
- Employment
- Public Awareness of Youth Programs and Activities
- Housing and Transportation
- Civic Engagement

In 2007-2008 Youth Commission has administered seven \$1,000 dollars grants to the following agencies/organizations:

- 20/20 Leadership

- East United Economic Development Center
- Episcopal Community Services
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Mattie Rhodes Center
- Police Athletic League
- ReStart

Bright Future Employment Initiative

The Bright Future Employment Initiative, started in 2005, provides employment opportunities for Kansas City, Missouri citizens ages 15-25.

In 2005, 175 young people were employed with the City of Kansas City. In 2006, the City partnered with the private sector and created 1,000 positions for youth, and in 2007, the same partnership created 1,500 positions for youth employment.

In addition to receiving employment, nearly 1,500 young people participated in career readiness courses and personal development coaching. The Full Employment and Sprint were instrumental in providing career coaches and hosting courses.

Highlights

- 1,500 jobs created for young people ages 14-25
- Nearly \$500,000 economic impact due to employment opportunities
- Partnerships developed with over 78 businesses
- Program endorsements from Sprint, Full Employment Council, Greater Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Community College, University of Missouri-Kansas City

The Youth Commission uses a youth development approach when increasing available employment opportunities for young people. The program seeks to provide young people with access to an array of support and opportunities to assist them in achieving a healthy sense of identity and full range of competencies necessary to succeed as adults.

Youth employment also addresses serious concerns of poverty reduction, sustainable development, workforce stability and school to work transitions.

The Kansas City Youth Commission uses an integrated and cohesive employment approach that includes private sector investment, extensive career training/counseling for youth participants, competitive hiring practices, effective job placement, and strong process evaluation methods.

Through hard work and persuasive pro-youth employment presentations an enthusiasm and energy among private sector employers has been fostered. There is a commitment and innovation among employers because the youth voice of Kansas City has assisted in their understanding of the positive business outcomes that derive from hiring young people. Providing youth employment that is productive, sustainable, with good working conditions and opportunities for advancement provides growth for business and for the City at large.

Civic Engagement

The Kansas City Youth Commission was established in 2005 to engage young people ages 12-23 in meaningful civic roles with local government. Commissioners serve a minimum of 20 hours per month by coordinating various special events and promoting positive youth-related community resources. The Youth Commission also strives to create inclusive resources for all young people in Kansas City and ensure opportunities for the youth voice to be heard.

There are 17 Youth Commissioners and several Youth Advisors who serve alongside the Commissioners to implement and promote positive activities for their peers.

Youth Commissioners and Advisors have participated in a variety of events/activities to help enhance the opportunities for young people throughout Kansas City. Some of these events/activities include:

Agenda KC- The Agenda KC leadership conference strives to foster intellectual and professional growth in young people throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. The

conference, focused on Kansas City's 16-35 year-old population and offered six unique tracks for both teenagers and adults, tailored for their personal development:

- Professional Development
- Personal Finance
- Civic and Political Engagement
- Personal Development
- Education and Career Exploration
- Entrepreneurship

Youth Commissioners recruited keynote speakers and conference attendees, as well working with the Youth Advocacy Office in staffing the events. The commissioners promoted the value of the event through Kansas City and were a major component of this event's success.

Police Athletic League (PAL) National Basketball Tournament- Youth Commissioners were an integral part of the success of the 2007 PAL National Basketball Tournament, awarded to Kansas City for 2007 and 2008. The tournament brings youth 18 and under, from around the United States together to compete for league's national championship. Teams play in a variety of age groups, one for girls and one for boys. Commissioners helped make the 5-day event a success and will be a major component of ensuring next year's tournament is just as good.

Additional civic engagement activities include:

- City Hall Tours: Young people learn the history of City Hall, tour selected areas, speak with government officials and learn about resources to increase their civic participation.
- Job Shadowing: Young people take a day to learn about employment opportunities in city government.
- Kansas City "Youth Beat Resource Magazine": A comprehensive resource guide to connect young people to local youth development agencies, exciting events and valuable information to help them achieve personal success.
- Youth Resource Line: A telephone line that announces youth events and resources. The resource line is updated weekly.
- Community Volunteering: Youth Commissioners and Advisors volunteer their time throughout Kansas City. In addition to staffing and representing youth at events,

commissioners and advisors help paint homes for elderly citizens and aid in the beautification of neighborhoods in the city.

- Youth Connection E-Newsletter: The Youth Advocacy Office and Commissioners electronically distribute information about youth-related community resources, including civic engagement, employment, health, recreation, education and community service
- Youth Beat TV: 30-minute teen talk show that focuses on educating teens about topics like education, health concerns, social issues and other activities. Shot on location in front of a studio audience at various locations, Youth Beat is produced quarterly in conjunction with the Youth Advocacy Office for the City of Kansas City, Mo.
- Explorer Tennis Clinic: Each summer, Kansas City's professional tennis team, the Explorers, conducts a 2-day camp for youth ages 5-18. The camp is sponsored by the

Future Initiatives and Recommendations

Youth District

It is recommended that a building be designated to provide youth entertainment and recreational activities. The Youth District is designed to provide a one-stop shop where young people can be employed and engage in a myriad of activities for enrichment and entertainment.

The Youth District will provide a safe, fun and central place for youth to participate in positive activities. The district will also address boredom among teens. Teens will be surrounded by activities and peers who share common interest and characteristics.

Young people and entertainment professionals will determine activities and events that take place at the Youth District. Activities may include arcade games, eatery, retail, bowling, dancing, etc.

The Kansas City Youth Commission recommends a building be identified and obtained for the Youth District and a partnership developed with the private sector for implementation.

Youth Bus

The Kansas City Youth Commission recommends a tour bus be designated for young people to ride to safe recreational and educational events.

Many youth are challenged by limited mobility to safe youth attractions (recreational and educational) in Kansas City. Often youth steer away from the Metro Bus system because the schedules seem intimidating and parents have safety concerns about youth standing alone at bus stops.

The Youth Bus is designed to pick up youth at Kansas City, Missouri community centers, take them to a designated safe event and return them to the community center. The schedule will accommodate the City's curfew ordinances. The Youth Commission would like to implement the Youth Bus every first Friday of the month from 6-11 pm. and the first Saturday of the every month from noon to 4 p.m.

The Youth Bus would specifically target high school aged youth (14-18), and in order to board the bus passengers will be required to present their high school identification badges.