



Informational Overview

Being a member of the Mayor's Youth Council (MYC) provides many benefits. Members can strengthen their resumes and scholarship applications, earn letters of recommendation from the Mayor of Wichita, and accumulate volunteer hours. However, students usually commit to MYC because they realize it is a unique and important opportunity to benefit their community. MYC participates in and coordinates several events tailored to the organization's mission, which is to "provide Wichita youth with the opportunity to weigh in on community issues and learn about city government." This overview provides a summary of the MYC's accomplishments during the previous school year and the aggressive agenda that it has planned for the upcoming membership year.

2014-2015 Key Accomplishments

- **Youth Leaders Across Wichita (YLAW)** is one of MYC's signature events. The event engages high school youth in a day of public service. This was the third year that two YLAW events were planned and completed. In the fall, MYC members and their guests helped the City's Park and Recreation Department, Salvation Army, and Wichita Children's Home bring cheer to children across the city by helping them with their holiday efforts. In the spring, the members and their guests worked with Bike Walk Wichita to remove litter from I-35 bike path and promote National Bike Month. Due to the event's continued success, there are plans to continue to make this a bi-annual event.
- **Junior Jumpstart** is another of MYC's signature events. In partnership with Mirror, Inc., MYC coordinated two member-led conferences at Century II that were attended by scores of high-school and middle-school students from across the greater Wichita area. Junior Jumpstart is a day-long educational conference that promotes pro-social behavior in youth and is an empirically supported best practice to prevent and combat substance abuse. As part of the conference, participants developed action plans to implement at their respective schools.
- The Legislative Affairs and Community Relations committee hosted the organization's first-ever **Democracy Day** at the Art Museum to educate teens and young adults about the importance of voting and civic engagement. The students also hosted a candidate panel that was attended by Jeff Longwell, Sam Williams, and Jim Price. Council Member Jeff Blubaugh also attended, and the event was covered by KAKE News and given a proclamation from the mayor.
- The Youth Affairs and Public Service committee worked with the City's videographer to develop a **public service announcement (PSA) that discouraged teens from texting while driving**. The video premiered at a City Council meeting and is available on the City's YouTube page. The committee also received a proclamation from the mayor to promote National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.



- A third Legislative Forum (previously known as the **Government Relations Teen Summit**) was organized in MYC's history. MYC members invited Mayor Carl Brewer, as well as the six city council members from the City of Wichita, to participate in a panel discussion about their education background, political background, and vision for youth in the city. Mayor Brewer and City Council Members Lavonta Williams, Jeff Longwell, and James Clendenin attended.
- Several members participated in Mayor Carl Brewer's last **State of the City** address and assisted with greeting guests and directing attendees and special guests to their designated seats. To continue the tradition, the Mayor of MYC delivered Mayor Brewer's formal introduction.
- MYC volunteered with the City of Wichita's **Night with Santa** event, which provided a positive, family-friendly holiday celebration for thousands of youth in Wichita. Prior to the event, the members attended a private reception with the mayor and council members.
- At the end-of-the-year banquet, five **scholarships** were awarded in the sum of \$3,500 to members who were high school seniors and demonstrated a commitment to MYC, community service, and furthering their education at a post-secondary institution.
- Three members served on **District Advisory Boards** as a youth member, providing them with the opportunity to contribute to the discussions about city issues that influence the vote of their City Council member. One of these students was also accepted into the National League of Cities' national **Council on Youth, Education, and Families**, serving as only one of four youth members alongside 90 local elected officials and representatives from national organizations.
- Four members traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the National League of Cities' **Congressional Cities Conference**. They participated in youth-led forums, networked with youth from across the country, gained a greater understanding of the tough issues facing the nation's cities, and explored the city's historic monuments, museums, and buildings.
- Nearly a dozen members made three **trips to Topeka** to attend a legislative luncheon, Red Ribbon Week training, explore the state capitol, observe state legislative proceedings, and meet state representatives.
- The MYC had several **opportunities to engage the Mayor and City Council** throughout the year, including the candidate forum, working the Mayor's booth during the Wagonmaster's Downtown Chili Cook-Off, walking with the Mayor and City Council members in the Veteran's Day and River Festival Sundown parades, and participating in exclusive pre- and post-event socials.
- The MYC **Advisory Committee** was also re-established to provide additional programmatic support to MYC's longevity and community impact. It consists of seven active community members, including an MYC alumnus at Wichita State University and high-level professionals at the Kansas Department for Children and Families, King Merj Public Relations, United Way, the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, and Wichita State University.



Looking Forward 2015-2016

In the upcoming membership year, MYC is committed to the vast majority of events listed previously. Additionally, MYC plans to spearhead the following significant community initiatives designed to improve attachment to the community and quality of life for Wichita youth.

- **Partnership with Safe Streets:** At Mayor Longwell's request, MYC will help to revive the Safe Streets program, which is focused on mobilizing local grassroots communities in Wichita to reduce the risk of crime, substance abuse, violence, and delinquency. MYC members will receive training in the Safe Streets model and then serve as trainers of their teenage peers in select high schools in the city. As a pilot project, MYC will select 4 Wichita schools to implement the strategy. Mirror, Inc. will assist with additional support and prepare an action plan related to substance use issues at each school. MYC members will act as mentors to students and provide prevention assistance and messaging to teachers and students interested in improving the protective factors in their school.
- **Partnership with the Kansas Department of Transportation:** MYC will work with KDOT to complete development of marketing materials aimed at educating new teen drivers about important rules of the road, encouraging increased teen driver safety, and providing instruction regarding how to appropriately interact with police officers. There may be additional opportunities to partner with KDOT on additional safe driving-related initiatives.
- **Expansion of Youth Leaders Across Wichita (YLAW):** The goal is to increase the number of participants at each YLAW event, lengthen the duration of the service projects, and partner with nonprofit agencies in the planning and implementation of the event. There will also be continued efforts to develop YLAW's brand in the community to increase participation and popularize public and community service as a lifestyle choice for Wichita's youth.
- **Creation of an MYC Alumni Chapter:** Being a member of MYC is a unique experience and one that will hopefully continue for these youth for many years as both active members and alumni. This year, we hope to launch an alumni chapter that will encourage past MYC members to remain involved in MYC initiatives by attending MYC meetings and events throughout the year. We would also like to keep past alumni updated on the current council's activities and give them the opportunity to provide feedback. This would be most easily accomplished through social media and an MYC Alumni Facebook page.
- **Networking:** The Mayor's Youth Council provides networking opportunities for its members. Planning and hosting banquets and networking events with elected officials and business leaders in the community not only provide Mayor's Youth Council members the opportunity to develop leadership and project management skills, but also allows them to develop important connections that serve to keep Wichita's young talent at home in the local economy. These events, along with annual lobbying trips to Topeka, provide opportunities to lobby for action on issues that are important to youth. Attending the annual National League of Cities' Congress of Cities allows selected members to network at a national level, develop a better understanding of the importance of local government, and return to Wichita with innovative ideas and initiatives rooted in best practices from around the country. MYC members will also be informed of opportunities to network with local youth groups and youth councils.

