



SNIPPET

Youth Programs Created by the Council to Support Service Gaps

Youth Council: City of Richmond Youth Council

Elements: Youth Development and Support, Academic Excellence, Youth Leadership

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subjects: Innovative Programs, Youth Involvement

The Challenge: Immediately after its formation, the City of Richmond Youth Council saw that the youth of Richmond were not being adequately served. Their vision for the City of Richmond was “a community where all youth are a success in school, work, and life. We envision a community that provides youth with positive adult relationships and role models. We envision a community where all youth are healthy and have equal opportunities to learn and where all youth are supported on their way to becoming self-sufficient adults. We envision all youth as leaders and contributors in our community.” The Council members saw their role as follows: “To serve as a catalyst to build a comprehensive, community-wide youth preparation and development service delivery system.” They saw that there were not sufficient opportunities for the youth of Richmond to get the support they needed.

The Practice and Evidence: Youth Council members set to work promptly to improve and expand programs available to their youth.

One program paid for driver’s education for youth preparing to take driver’s license exams. Another program prepared a group of 23 junior and senior high school young women to go to college. Council staff took the young women on a tour of northern California’s colleges (traditional black colleges were highlighted), allowing the students to fully explore their educational opportunities. All seniors in the program took the ACT and applied to college.

Each of the 70 WIA-enrolled youth regularly attended after-school tutoring classes four days per week to help them with daily homework, and math and writing skills. During the first program year, 2002, 40 youth went through a program where they were required to take two classes per week for six weeks. Classes included quick and healthy cooking, sex education, and money management.

The Council also formed the Youth Leadership Team, a team of outgoing, determined WIA-enrolled youth. This close-knit group accomplished much in a short time and impressed the Council with their “can do” attitudes. The youth developed their own mission statement: “We are the youth of the City of Pride and Purpose committed to becoming dedicated and confident leaders for youth.” The multiple roles of the Youth Leadership Team are to 1) make youth programs youth focused, 2) advise the Youth Council on youth issues and needs, 3) build

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relationships and collaborations, 4) increase program visibility, and, 5) represent the youth of the City of Richmond.

The Youth Leadership Team has been involved in many activities that both support them as leaders and promote the work of the Council. For example, staff of the Council took the Youth Leadership Team to Merced for a youth conference. The Youth Leadership Team also developed a presentation and arranged with area high school teachers to bring it to students in the classroom so as to educate students about the Council and its programs. Furthermore, the team writes monthly articles that describe the programs and youth activities of the Youth Council for publication in a local newspaper.

The Details: The Council determined what additional programs to offer by conducting surveys that asked youth what programs the schools and community formerly offered at no charge, but were no longer available. The Council members then wrote proposals to obtain funds to support them. They received three grants and began to implement programs that gave in-school and out-of-school youth much needed assistance.

Youth Leadership Team members attended a two-day camping retreat to learn about the Council and how to talk with adults about issues they had at home or with friends so that the Council would be better able to support them. Close bonds were formed between the adults and youth who attended. Youth also met for a few Saturdays to prepare for their work with the Council.

Where to Go for More Information City of Richmond Youth Council

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