City of Tempe

Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Town Hall Report

2016

Dear Mayor and City Council:

This has been another productive year for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC). The activities organized by MYAC have allowed Tempe's youth to contribute their ideas and assist in the continued development of our city. We would like to thank you for your on-going support of our Commission and its projects.

The events sponsored by MYAC this year were very successful. We developed and provided the "Seed 'n Lead" project that promoted City of Tempe Recycling services and sustainability projects to elementary school aged children. The project was very well received by Kid Zone students and we hope to continue similar community service projects in the future.

Our annual Town Hall allowed youth and community leaders to exchange ideas on issues concerning youth. A summary of the dialogue that occurred and recommendations made at Youth Town Hall are detailed in this report. These recommendations are the original ideas of Tempe's youth to solve problems our community faces.

On behalf of the Commission I would like to thank you again for your dedication and commitment to the youth of Tempe. The successes we have had could not have been achieved without your support.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bish, Youth Town Hall Chair
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2015/2016 Officers

Christopher Moffitt
Chair

Nomith Murari
Vice Chair

Smita Gopalakrishnan
Administrative Recorder

Kevin Dunnahoo
Treasurer

Daniel Bish
Youth Town Hall Chair

Ryan Emerson
Community Service Project Chair

Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

2015/2016 Members

Alexis Blanc

Tiffanie Cappello-Lee

Hayden Eastwood

Juliet Farr

Jason George

Sophia Gonzalez

Nicholas Hargis

Nandini Mishra

Aemelia Morris

Marissa Salazar

Jaren Savage

Carter Vierra

Ellie Young

Safiyah Zubair

Elizabeth Zyriek

Tempe City Council

Mayor

Mark Mitchell

Vice Mayor

Corey Woods

Council Members

Robin Arredondo- Savage

Kolby Granville

Lauren Kuby

Joel Navarro

David Schapira

Tempe Youth Town Hall Report

Presented by

Daniel Bish

Youth Town Hall Chair

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission sponsors Tempe's Youth Town Hall each year to bring together teens and adults from the community to discuss issues of concern to Tempe's youth and offer recommendations for practical solutions to these issues.

This was Tempe's thirty-sixth year to sponsor Youth Town Hall and was held Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at the Westside Community Center. To ensure input from all sectors of our community, representatives from high schools, middle schools, service clubs, youth organizations, community centers, local businesses, the police department, and juvenile court were invited to participate.

Participants were divided into six discussion groups covering three topic areas. Two groups discussed "**Promoting Social Acceptance**" and two other groups discussed "**Promoting Successful Futures**." The remaining two groups addressed "**Youth Enhancing School Environments**."

After enjoying welcoming comments by Mayor Mark Mitchell participants met in their issue groups. They began discussion of their assigned topic by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. Groups then made recommendations for solutions and focused on those that were practical and could be easily implemented. Youth spokespersons from each of the discussion groups presented their committee's recommendations to all Town Hall participants in the closing general session. These presentations gave those in attendance the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from each other.

The Youth Town Hall Report is available to various agencies, organizations, schools and service clubs to review and use as a planning tool in our community. We hope that Youth Town Hall will continue to be a success and a model on how to effectively get input directly from youth on issues that impact them.

CITY OF TEMPE YOUTH TOWN HALL AGENDA

Tuesday, February 23, 2016
Westside Community Center
715 West Fifth Street

8:10 - 8:30	**Registration**		Front of Westside Community Center Continental Breakfast provided
8:30 - 8:50	**Opening Session**		Westside Community Center Gymnasium
	Welcome	-	Christopher Moffitt, MYAC Chairperson
	Comments	-	Mayor Mark Mitchell, City of Tempe
	Instructions	-	Daniel Bish, Youth Town Hall Chairperson

9:00 – 11:40 **Committee Sessions** - Breaks will occur at the discretion of each committee.

Committee A - "Promoting Successful Futures - 1"
Westside Community Center – Sunset Room

Committee B - "Promoting Successful Futures - 2"
Westside Community Center – Riverside Room

Committee C - "Promoting Social Acceptance- 1"
Westside Community Center – Los Vecinos

Committee D - "Promoting Social Acceptance- 2"
Westside Community Center – Teen Room

Committee E - "Youth Enhancing School Environments -1"
Westside Community Center – Lindon Park Room

Committee F - "Youth Enhancing School Environments - 2"
Westside Community Center – Art Room

11:40 – 12:30 **Lunch** – Provided to all participants at the Westside Community Center
Catered by Dilly's Deli

12:35 – 1:40 **Committee Sessions Resume - Discussion Wrap-Up**

1:45 - 2:05 **Closing Session** – Westside Community Center Gymnasium

Committee Summaries
Each committee representative will give a 3 to 5 minute summary.

Closing Remarks – Daniel Bish, Youth Town Hall Chairperson

Promoting Social Acceptance - 1

Discussion Group Summary:

The group discussion focused on encouraging social acceptance by fighting against negative peer pressure which often leads people of all ages to change who they are and suffer mental and physical effects. These mental and physical effects can include depression, less focus in school, and engaging in risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. While it is easier said than done, the group agreed that people need to have a strong sense of themselves and not be afraid to be different. Activities, groups and clubs that work to promote social acceptance in the schools were also identified: Challenge Day, Best Buddies, Stand and Serve, All Stars, Speak Up- Reach Out, and Link Crew. The group felt that these clubs could help to weave a "culture of kindness" into school classes, sports, and activities to build a stronger sense of community and acceptance at school.

Recommendations:

1. Develop the APP Crew in Tempe middle and high schools.

The APP (Against Peer Pressure) Crew would be a student-led club/organization in each middle school and high school whose focus would be to help students feel accepted. The APP Crew would create an infrastructure and make students aware of existing programs as well as helping to facilitate new programs. This club would also have a Smartphone application that the City of Tempe Information Technology Department could develop with the school computer science classes. All students in Tempe middle and high schools could have access to this app. Delegates from all school APP Crews would meet to create content such as discussions threads, stories, and postings that pertain to social acceptance. This would be an easily accessible, local, friendly, and safe application similar to Tumblr.

2. Host a social acceptance City of Tempe event called, APPchella.

This event was inspired by the extremely popular musical festival called, Coachella. The City of Tempe could partner with Tempe middle and high school clubs such as Stand and Serve, Link Crew, and Speak Up-Reach Out to sponsor an event featuring music, art, and activities that promote social acceptance and diversity within the City of Tempe. The members of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission and delegates from the APP Crews would be the main planners of this event.

3. Develop a "Teaching Teachers" initiative.

Members of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission and selected students from middle and high schools would work on curriculum to be presented to teachers at an in-service training. The purpose would be to enhance teachers' awareness of the concerns and issues facing today's students and to encourage them to be attentive to peer pressure within their classrooms.

Promoting Social Acceptance - 1

Facilitators: Rebecca Bond City of Tempe – Human Services
Tiffanie Cappello-Lee Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Caitlynn Barnes	Maricopa Youth Council
Michael Bernard	McClintock High School
Jazmine Carranza	Gilliland Middle School
Steve Delgado	McClintock High School
Kerstin Early	Ward Traditional Academy
Rachel Early	Ward Traditional Academy
Vincent Rhae Gomez	McClintock High School
Itchell Guzman	Tempe High School
Tommie Oliverio-Lauderdale	McClintock High School
Nina Sarappo	Maricopa Youth Council
Isabel Warriner	Connolly Middle School
Mackenzie White	Marcos de Niza High School

Adult Participants

Advisor Heather Lozano	Maricopa Youth Council
Assistant Principal Mindy Udall Schulte	Connolly Middle School
Intern Jessica Vasquez	Compadre Academy TAPP Program

Promoting Social Acceptance – 2

Discussion Group Summary:

The discussion group started by defining social conformity, peer pressure, and social acceptance within Tempe middle and high schools. All of these concepts are parts of a person's desire to fit into a group of people. These concepts are an integral part of life in and outside of schools. People seek group inclusion because it helps them to feel comfortable and can encourage them to try new things. Some negative effects of people's desire to fit in include: engaging in risky behaviors like drug and alcohol use or breaking the law, a fear of expressing oneself, engaging in bullying, or simply being judgmental of others. The group then discussed how peer pressure can be used to develop activities that create a positive ripple effect in Tempe middle and high schools to encourage empathy and compassion using greater mindfulness of other people.

Recommendations:

1. Create empathy and understanding curriculum for school health classes.

Tempe health class instructors could partner with Tempe students, school counselors, and social workers to create a one-day lesson plan using free online resources. This lesson plan would instruct students on mindfulness, empathy, and understanding of other people. The class would be free and would only take one day of teaching to enhance an environment of acceptance and kindness in schools.

2. Develop "Get to Know Your Neighbors" events in Tempe.

Tempe neighborhood associations, local businesses, the City of Tempe Diversity Department, and school officials could collaborate to develop community events at Tempe Beach Park that encourage a culture of connectedness. These events would be sponsored by local businesses and would have games, prizes, coupons, and discounts at local stores to inspire people to attend. The events would have fun activities, music, and games and would create a ripple effect of acceptance and community throughout Tempe.

3. Create "Safe Places" in every school.

Tempe middle and high schools could work with students to ensure that there is a designated room in every school where students can go to express themselves. These places would have student mentors and an adult advisor who advertise and run the space.

Promoting Social Acceptance – 2

Facilitators: Adrian Jamieson **Inspire Arizona**
Sophia Gonzalez **Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Israel Carrizosa	Gilliland Middle School
Richard Delgado	McClintock High School
Grace Elias	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Zaria Guignard	McClintock High School
Morgan Kubasko	Ward Traditional Academy
Anthalis McEntire	Gilliland Middle School
Hannah Olsen	McClintock High School
Fatima Qureshi	Corona del Sol High School
Princess Ixora Richard	Gilliland Middle School
Joey Savage	Tempe High School
Maya Sharp	Ward Traditional Academy
Leon Sipes	Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Governing Board Vice President Teresa Devine	Tempe Elementary Schools
Teen Programs Coordinator Ambra Jordan	ICAN/ CCYSA

Promoting Successful Futures – 1

Discussion Group Summary:

Our discussion began by defining what was meant by a successful future. The group defined success as personal happiness and individual goal achievement. They narrowed the discussion to areas of competence in interpersonal skills, civic awareness, and financial literacy. The group felt these were foundational to truly achieving a successful future. The group acknowledged that youth are generally unprepared in these areas. They believe more youth would be successful if there were greater opportunities for involvement in civic engagement through extracurricular activities and coaching from mentors/ role models. Parents and teachers would be most helpful in developing students' communication skills and exposure to real-life financial lessons. Youth agreed that on their own, they may not take the risks to develop these skills for fear of being judged by their peers.

Recommendations:

1. Enhancing financial education opportunities and classes.

The City of Tempe would promote and enhance the existing Tempe Community Council financial literacy classes for youth by increasing public outreach and providing a wide array of presenters to talk about loans, interest rates, the importance of saving, and credit card debt. The Tempe Union High School District could also sponsor a "Finance Your Future" club and/or offer classes on various financial subjects. The district would sponsor a weekend event such as 'Biz Town' so youth can have a deeper understanding of how business and finances work in the real sense.

2. Sponsor events for youth civic involvement and awareness.

The Tempe Library and the City of Tempe could hold discussions and events at the library focusing on current events, elections, and civic activities to engage and inform youth. The events could include volunteer opportunities, sustainability awareness, and promote good citizenship. This can be achieved by continuing to hold Youth Town Hall and create an environment where people find meaning and purpose to make a difference in their community.

3. Promote interpersonal and communication skills through existing city programs.

MYAC members would promote youth communication workshops at their schools. These workshops would be provided by the Genesis Program, ACYR, and College Connect at the Tempe Public Library. Topics would include various communication skill sets such as job

interviewing. The workshops would be held at the library to provide a safe and accessible place for students to have face to face interactions with each other and program instructors.

Promoting Successful Futures – 1

Facilitators: Mickie Berry	**City of Tempe- Human Services**
Kevin Dunnahooo	**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Madison Becker	Fees College Preparatory Middle School
Patti Chagolla	McClintock High School
Aimee Cheng	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Carmela Guaglianone	McClintock High School
Noble Harasha	Connolly Middle School
Ameil Jones	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Clara Moffitt	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Emma Moriarty	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Eric Nguyen	Tempe High School
Carlos Torres	Gilliland Middle School
Antoine Williams	Connolly Middle School

Adult Participants

Micah Corporaal	City of Tempe Public Library
Education Coordinator Marie Raymond	City of Tempe
Veekas Shrivastava	Community Member
Tonia Smith	Boys and Girls Club

Promoting Successful Futures – 2

Discussion Group Summary:

Our discussion focused on promoting successful futures by increasing opportunities for youth to learn about civic engagement, leadership, and financial literacy. Often, young people do not feel that they have a voice and are left out of the political process. In addition their parents do not inform them about financial literacy. As a result, youth do not know who to ask, or what to ask about these important life skills. Consequently, youth become disinterested in these topics and they often give up on learning more about them. The group members felt that these matters need to start with families but schools are the best place to increase awareness about these issues. The group concluded that the city and schools need to increase opportunities for engagement in civics, finances, and youth leadership to increase students' potential for a successful future.

Recommendations:

1. Develop financial literacy elective courses in Tempe middle and high schools.

Tempe middle and high schools could increase student understanding of financial literacy by providing personal finance elective courses. These classes could be provided by health instructors in schools to increase student understanding of credit, debt, and investing. The students in the discussion felt that learning about financial literacy through courses would not only increase their knowledge and awareness of this topic, but would also provide a safe environment for them to ask questions and practice these skills.

2. Create a teen voting guide.

School clubs such as 'Constitution Club' could partner with non-profit organizations such as Inspire Arizona to create a document that details the beliefs of local and national voting candidates and would match these beliefs with topics relevant to youth- for example, educational funding. This would create greater understanding of political parties and increase students' interest in the voting process. This document would be available online and in print form at Tempe middle and high schools as well as the Tempe Public Library.

3. Create a school-based 'phone-a-friend' life line.

The city and College Connect could recruit, train, and manage adult volunteers on life skills so that youth in Tempe could call this service whenever they have questions about finances, civic engagement, or leadership opportunities in Tempe. The volunteer adults would either provide advice or refer students to professionals so students could have a safe, non-judgmental platform to talk about their personal issues and ask questions about life skills.

Promoting Successful Futures – 2

Facilitators: Jeremy King **City of Tempe- Community Services**
Elizabeth Zyriek **Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Anna Bell	Marcos de Niza High School
Terry Byrd	Kyrene Middle School
Ruth Tun	Tempe High School
Joslyn Murillo	Tempe High School
Josh Owen	Corona del Sol High School
Kale Quismorio	Kyrene Middle School
Maliahlani Readis	Connolly Middle School
Carter Sampson	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Noah Simmons	Kyrene Middle School
Fiorella Viccina	Tempe Preparatory Academy

Adult Participants

Library Assistant Laurie Cruz	Gilliland Middle School
Prevention Staff Khlid Jenkins	Kyrene Middle School
Governing Board Member Sandy Lowe	Tempe Union High School District
Governing Board Member Patrick Morales	Tempe Elementary Schools
Principal Jama Nacke	Kyrene Middle School
Youth Leadership Program Advisor Desmond Sweet	ACYR

Youth Enhancing School Environments – 1

Discussion Group Summary:

Our discussion began by defining school environments. The school environment includes the classrooms, students, teachers, and extracurricular activities. Several factors affect how students engage with this environment such as the physical appearance of the school and students' relationships with their teachers, other students, and the school staff. Often times, classroom sizes are too large for students to connect with teachers and their fellow students and some teachers do not maintain a positive atmosphere in their classrooms. The group felt that enhancing the physical appearance of schools as well as providing a safe and inviting atmosphere is highly critical because many students see school as a safe haven. Schools are also a central hub for student learning, inspiration, and preparation for their future goals.

Recommendations:

1. Create a 'Club for Clubs.'

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission could recruit students to create a club that manages all financial and administrative tasks for clubs in every middle and high school so that teachers can have more time to teach. This club could also administer surveys to students and teachers to determine what clubs students want in their schools and what clubs the teachers would like to host. This club could initiate more positive interactions between teachers and students and enhance opportunities for student interests and leadership opportunities.

2. Encourage project-based learning in middle and high schools.

The Tempe Elementary and High school districts could work with the Tempe Learning Center to encourage and train teachers to create more opportunities for group projects. This initiative would provide more chances for students to interact with each other one-on-one and would help teachers to manage over-congested classrooms.

3. Create a student/ teacher school beautification task-force.

Students who are interested in art and school beautification could form a task force with City of Tempe art teachers as well as school art teachers to design and redecorate school campuses. This task force would meet during the summer months to plan projects so that they can present their ideas to the school districts for approval in the fall. Throughout the school year, student volunteers would work to implement these design plans, which might include murals, classroom decorations, and/or landscape enhancements. This recommendation would not only beautify school campuses but also provide volunteer opportunities for students and create a greater sense of community among students and adults in Tempe.

Youth Enhancing School Environments – 1

Facilitators: Paloma Ibañez **Inspire Arizona**
Alexis Blanc **Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Gloria Ayala	Tempe High School
Braylen Drew	Marcos de Niza High School
Liam Huggins	McClintock High School
Antoine Lewis	Tempe High School
Gaby Martinez	Tempe High School
Olivia Milagro Mabry	Fees College Preparatory Middle School
Betsabe Santos	Tempe High School
Jeffrey Snoddy	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Syler Spor	Tempe High School
Alberto Valenzuela	McClintock High School

Adult Participants

Principal JoLyn Arredondo-Gibbons	Gilliland Middle School
Capacity Building Specialist Carla Pelletier	Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Youth Enhancing School Environments – 2

Discussion Group Summary:

The discussion began by describing the elements of a school environment: the physical buildings; and environmental factors that contribute to students' and teachers' physical, social, and emotional well-being. Group participants determined several key components of a positive school environment which included: trust, respect, inclusion, and a place where students feel they can be safe and belong. The group further defined respect in two categories, 'authoritative' (or adults demanding respect from students) and 'human' (or kindness). Youth in the discussion group stated that they often experience 'authoritative' respect from their teachers, though they felt that they would feel more comfortable in their school environments if teachers used 'human' respect more often. Members of the discussion group felt that often times, teachers work within a disciplinary system that focuses on negative reinforcement and this can create a discouraging environment for students. This disciplinary system also affects how students engage with one another by enforcing limited bullying prevention and over-utilizing suspension as a punishment for bullying. Discussion group participants stressed the importance of an inclusive, respectful, and positive school environment as many students consider their schools to be a safe haven.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and annual tribute to educators and students.

This student-driven initiative would partner with the city to invite community members to be involved in a special tribute to Tempe educators and schools. At each school during the first week of school, students would formally thank educators for their commitment to Tempe youth while highlighting the following components of a positive school environment: providing encouragement, focusing on positive reinforcement, being inclusive, and developing a sense of community. This tribute would provide Tempe students with a platform to encourage a safe, engaging, respectful, and joyful school environment among all students and school staff.

2. Create #TempeTogether: Social Media Blitz.

Tempe school districts and the City of Tempe's Communications Office could develop a social media blitz called, #TempeTogether. Student, city, and school social media sites would send positive messages via Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to encourage a sense of positivity and community cohesiveness among all Tempe residents.

3. Provide verbal de-escalation classes to all students and teachers.

This initiative would be a collaborative effort between the City and the school districts. The City of Tempe could identify trainers to teach students and teachers how to de-escalate social situations before they become combative. These classes would specifically teach participants how to use body language and verbal speech skills necessary to encourage a

positive, inclusive, and respectful school environment and would extend throughout the Tempe community.

Youth Enhancing School Environments – 2

Facilitators: Isela Blanc **City of Tempe Community Member**
Safiyah Zubair **Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Jose Beltran	Gilliland Middle School
Sabrina Birch	Marcos de Niza High School
Reyna Cruz	Tempe High School
Breanna Diaz	Tempe High School
Brach Drew	Fees College Preparatory Middle School
Zaria Guignard	McClintock High School
Alyssa Hollingsworth	Maricopa Youth Council
Ramon Martinez	Tempe High School
Ariane Redding	McClintock High School
Nizhoni Saenz	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Lorenzo Valencia	Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Detective Larry Baggs	Connolly Middle School Resource Officer
Principal Kacy C. Baxter	Fees College Preparatory Middle School
Sergeant Joe Brudnock	Tempe Police Department Juvenile Unit
Social Worker Katie Harrison	Fees College Preparatory Middle School
Intern Deziree Rodarte	Compadre High School TAPP