

Project Proposal: Youth Bill of Rights

Subject

To create and implement a Youth Bill of Rights; a document that outlines the fundamental rights of all children and youth for a successful development. Council and community organizations would support this document by committing to provide a pre-determined minimum amount of outlined recommendations in their everyday work.

History/Background

In 2008, the San Mateo Youth Commission, in collaboration with Peninsula Partnership leadership Council, created a Bill of Rights that has since been adopted by both the San Mateo City Council and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. The San Mateo Youth Commission has encouraged all other Youth Commissions to create or adopt a Bill of Rights for their cities. After close review, the San Jose Youth Commission felt that our city's youth are so unique and diverse, it would be best to create a Youth Bill of Rights specific to San Jose.

Purpose

As a youth advocate, the Youth Commission is committed to empowering youth by offering them resources to succeed. The Youth Bill of Rights can be a document used to assist when lobbying for legislation and policies recommendations that directly affect youth in San Jose. Furthermore, it helps to solidify the notion that youth are important to the City of San José by enlisting the community commitment to support youth in a tangible way.

Document Goals

1. to create a tangible way that community members, organizations and other groups can support and empower youth
2. To ensure that youth are seen as a valuable resource and feel that they are a priority in the City of San Jose
3. To create a network that advocates for the collective responsibility, healthy development and success of all children and youth in San Jose

Intended use

We intend to have this document adopted by multiple organizations and ultimately the San Jose City Council. To provide visibility for agencies that adopt the Youth Bill of Rights and use this document as leverage when lobbying for or against policies that directly affect youth.

Why Project Cornerstone

The Youth Commission feels that Project Cornerstone would be the ideal agency partner for many reasons. Project Cornerstone is a well-respected organization that values and respects

youth ideas, opinions and concerns. Project Cornerstones core values are closely related to those of the Youth Commission. Furthermore, like the Youth Commission, Project Cornerstone's mission is to advocate for youth. Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons is that the Developmental Assets and the Youth Bill of Rights both serve as tangible rights that all youth should have, and that all adults can give.

Partnership Proposal

The Youth Commission would like to partner with Project Cornerstone in the creation and promotion of the Youth Bill of Rights. Written creation and design of this document will consist of Project Cornerstone staff, parents and other key Project Cornerstone members in collaboration with Youth Commissioners and their YACs. The Youth Commission would further like to utilize the Development Assets as the core foundation of this document and request that Project Cornerstone present the Youth Bill of Rights to various organizations and agencies in an effort to gather support for this document.

Partnership Benefits

The Youth Commission believes that once this document has been created and adopted, it will contribute to an increase percentage of assets youth feel they have (for example, asset #14 – adult role models or asset #8 – youth seen as resources). Other benefits would be the increase awareness of the developmental assets in neighborhoods, schools, organizations and communities. The Youth Commission will have an adopted document to base City Council recommendations. The ultimate benefit would be that youth and teens will be given tangible rights to grow and develop in a supportive community.

Bill of Rights Components

After doing an initial brainstorm, these are some components that will be essential to include.

- Positive Environment – home, school, neighborhood
- Basic Human Needs – shelter, food, clothing
- Quality Education
- Life Skills
- Support – Peer, Adult, all aspects of life
- Social Skills
- Positive personal image
- Safe environment for kids – after-school programs, community centers, etc.

Process

Project Cornerstone and Youth Commission create draft of Bill of Rights within a 3 month time frame. Youth Commission holds town hall meetings/forums to gather community, specifically youth and teen feedback on preliminary document and

* Present final draft to attendees at 3rd Annual Youth Conference

Final version is written by Project Cornerstone and Youth Commission

Youth Bill of Rights is presented to council liaison the rules committee

Youth Bill of Rights is presented by Vice Mayor Chirco to City Council

Youth Bill of Rights is placed on Council agenda

* Council moves to adopt Youth Bill of Rights