



Clark County Youth Commission
Report to the Clark County
Board of County Councilors
Action Planning for Citizen Engagement
July 2017

Our Story

The Clark County Youth Commission is a youth-driven advisory board and leadership development program established by the Clark County Board of Commissioners in April 1998. Members, ages 11-19, aim to represent all the school districts and the diverse youth living in Clark County.

Members provide a youth-oriented point-of-view to the work of the Board of County Councilors, county departments and community organizations. They inform these groups about issues important to youth, make suggestions on how to address the issues and provide advice on building positive partnerships with youth.



During the 2016-2017 term Youth Commissioners partook in action planning and implementation of many projects discussed in last year's report to the Board of County Councilors (2015-2016) focusing on increasing citizen engagement. A few of these projects will be outlined in this report.



@ClarkCountyGo and #ChooseYourY

The Youth Commission developed a marketing plan for Twitter and Instagram accounts called "Clark County Go!" Clark County Go is a social media platform for youth by youth inviting community members to get involved, become informed, volunteer and more.

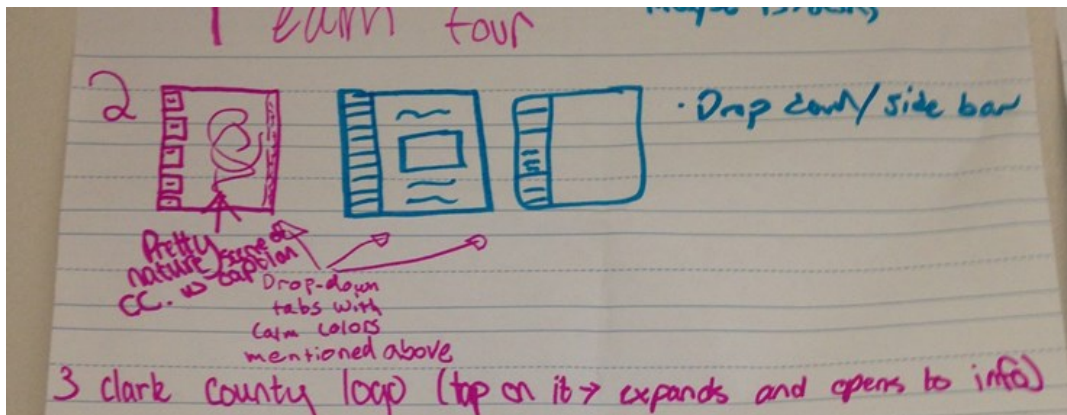
The Youth Commission launched their social media in December 2016 with a campaign called #ChooseYourY. The idea behind #ChooseYourY is that they wanted to engage youth online to share why they get involved in their community. #ChooseYourY can also be translated into other call-to-actions, like "Share your goals for the New Year #ChooseYourY." Users can then respond and submissions can be tracked using the hashtag.



www.Instagram.com/ClarkCountyGo



www.Twitter.com/ClarkCountyGo



Mobile App Development

One of the most significant projects of the year was assisting the development of a mobile app that would enable users to better engage with county government, services and the greater community. Staff from the Clark County GIS department met several times with Youth Commissioners to make this idea come to life.

What began as a brainstorming session for the ultimate app turned into a formal report detailing the design, appearance, content and functionality of the Youth Commission recommendations. This report also included links to resources on the current county website that should be reformatted for use within the app. The report was presented to GIS Manager Bob Pool and his GIS Analyst Garrett Ginter.

The first version of the app includes an interactive map of parks and trails within the county. The goal is that in future, features will be added to the app and could include volunteer opportunities, behavioral health services, programs the county currently offers for youth and an outline of transportation and bus routes.

The app is currently available for download from the Apple and Android stores: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/parks-and-trails/id1252041191?mt=8>. The GIS department also designed a web-based version of the app that anyone can open in their web browsers, further increasing accessibility: <https://gis.clark.wa.gov/maps/ParksandTrails/>.



Youth House Outcomes

Youth Commissioners felt passionate about informing their community of the outcomes related to the work they and other programs do at the Clark County Youth House. The outcomes they studied this year included Distance Traveled concepts, the 40 Developmental Assets of the Search Institute as well as the Risk and Protective Factors of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine and the Washington State Risk and Protective Factor model.

Youth Commissioners utilized a technique called Appreciative Inquiry to interview each other, record their conversations and extract meaning from these records. Outcomes typically fell into one of eight categories:

- Confidence building
- Safe place to bond and grow
- Interacting with older peers/adult role models
- Significance of “passing the torch”
- Working cohesively towards a common goal
- Cultivating a sense of community
- Exposure to diversity
- Building professional and social skills

Some of the outcome quotes captured are provided below:

“Ava and I stayed up on my first retreat having really deep and open conversation. I finally felt like I had a place I could truly connect with people and be honest. I didn’t have that safety anywhere else.” -Amy Bishop-Smith

“In political situations people often don’t get along when they disagree. On the Youth Commission, we often disagree but still do great work and get things done. The Youth Commission is a model for other groups.” -Ava Town

“Youth Commission is about finding our voice, coming out of our shell and challenging our comfort zone.” -John Keller

“The Youth Commission is somewhere where you can be yourself and not worry what other people are thinking.” -Creed Zandamela

“Youth Commission helps me be more professional. I’ve learned about “adulting” and trying new things that I’ve been afraid of, like public speaking. Now I can give a presentation without being scared.” -Kari Xander

“There are very diverse members of the community in Clark County. Those that are in the Youth Commission are all cared about and they are heard.” -Ian Nickels

Other Work

The Youth Commission worked on many projects during the year that are not featured in this report. Some of these efforts include designing a county job shadow program, working towards offering youth representation on official county advisory boards (in addition to the Youth Commission), planning/hosting the Youth House Art Show and planning/hosting the Youth Achievement Celebration.



For More Information

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Special Thanks

Clark County Board of County Councilors

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Scott Wilson, Operations Manager

Greg Fish, IT Manager

Chief Steve Shae, Chief Deputy Sherriff

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