

City of Tempe

**Mayor's Youth Advisory
Commission**

Youth Town Hall Report

2002



Dear Mayor and City Council:

This has been another exciting year for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission. Activities organized by MYAC have allowed Tempe's youth to contribute their ideas and support to the continual development and improvement 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. Student Government Day emphasized the importance and effectiveness of community involvement. High school students were given the opportunity to experience first hand the inner workings of government by shadowing city officials and participating in a mock City Council meeting.

Youth Town Hall is an annual event that allows youth and community leaders to exchange ideas on issues concerning youth. A summary of the dialogue that occurred, and the recommendations made, is included in this report. These recommendations are the original ideas of Tempe's youth to solve problems facing our community.

As I present this year's Youth Town Hall report, 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,

**Sasha Redman, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2001/2002 Officers**

Danielle Castelli
Chairperson

Matt Cicinelli
Vice Chairperson

Cheyenne Rightmire
Administrative Recorder

Adam Swenson
Treasurer

Elizabeth Watson
Student Government Days Chairperson

Sasha Redman
Youth Town Hall Chairperson

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2001/2002 Members**

**Eric Blake
Katie Butler
Danielle Castelli
Stephen Chang
Kirstin Chepeus
Matt Cicinelli
Jared Cripe
Britney Griggs
Stacey Norgren
Sasha Redman
Cheyanne Rightmire
Jenna Robbins
Sulaiman Stephens
Adam Swenson
Maycie Thornton
Tina Von Dane
Elizabeth Watson
Spencer Williams
Katie Wilson**

Tempe City Council

Mayor

Neil G. Giuliano

Vice Mayor

Barbara Carter

Council Members

Ben Arredondo

Dennis J. Cahill

Leonard Copple

Pam Goronkin

Mark Mitchell

**Tempe Youth Town Hall
Chairperson's Report**

Presented by

Sasha Redman

Youth Town Hall Chairperson

March 20, 2002

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

This was Tempe's twenty-second year to sponsor Youth Town Hall, which was held Wednesday, March 20, 2002 at the Escalante Community Center. In order to receive input from all sectors of the 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 **Preventing Dating Violence**, while two other groups discussed **Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations**. The remaining two groups addressed **Preventing Teen Suicide**.

After a welcome by Vice Mayor Leonard Cople, and a keynote address by Alonzo Jones of Arizona State University's Multicultural Center, participants met in their groups and began discussion of their assigned topics by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. Groups made recommendations for solutions, focusing 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. This gave those in attendance the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from one another.

This report is available to various agencies, organizations, schools and service clubs to be reviewed and used as a planning tool in the community. Youth Town Hall continues to afford both youth and adults the opportunity to communicate openly with one another about important issues that affect them. It is hoped that Youth Town Hall will continue to be the model and success it has been in the past.

CITY OF TEMPE YOUTH TOWN HALL AGENDA

Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Escalante Community Center
2150 East Orange Street

- 8:15 - 8:45** **Registration** Front of Escalante Community Center
Continental Breakfast served
- 8:45 - 9:20** **Opening Session** Escalante Community Center Gymnasium
- Introduction -Danielle Castelli, MYAC Chair
- Welcome - Vice Mayor Leonard Copple, City of Tempe
- Special Awards - Vice Mayor Leonard Copple, City of Tempe
- Keynote Address - Alonzo Jones, Arizona State University,
Multicultural Student Center
- Instructions - Sasha Redman, Youth Town Hall Chairperson, 2002
- 9:30 - 12:00** **Committee Sessions** - Breaks will occur at the discretion of each committee.
Refreshments will be available in the meeting rooms.
- Committee A** - "Preventing Dating Violence - 1"
Escalante Community Center – Amistad Room
- Committee B** - " Preventing Dating Violence - 2"
Escalante Community Center – Brio Room
- Committee C** - "Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 1"
Escalante Community Center – Bravo Room
- Committee D** - "Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 2"
Escalante Community Center – La Paz Room
- Committee E** - "Preventing Teen Suicide - 1"
Flora Thew Elementary School – Room 20
- Committee F** - "Preventing Teen Suicide - 2"
Flora Thew Elementary School – Room 21
- 12:00 - 1:00** **Lunch** – Provided to all participants poolside at the Escalante Community Center
Catered by College Street Deli
- 1:00 – 1:55** **Committee Sessions Resume - Discussion Wrap-Up**
- 2:00 - 2:30** **Closing Session** – Escalante Community Center Gymnasium
- Committee Summaries
- Each committee representative will give a 3 to 5 minute summary.
- Closing Remarks – Sasha Redman, Town Hall Chairperson

Preventing Dating Violence - 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group focused on causes of dating violence, reasons for the failure by parents, teens, and others to identify initial signs of abuse, and on prevention and intervention strategies. We recognized that children learn healthy behaviors at a young age and these behaviors must be reinforced throughout their developmental years. Our group identified the following factors as contributing to dating violence:

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of knowledge on what constitutes healthy relationships
- Lack of positive role models
- Violence viewed as a solution and reinforced as acceptable in the media.

Our discussion group's recommendations focused on both prevention and intervention strategies to combat dating violence.

Recommendations:

1. Provide social health education in school curriculums.

School health curriculums should incorporate social health topics, including information on social skills, healthy relationships, and dating violence. A parent education component that provides parents with information on teen dating violence indicators should be included in this curriculum.

2. Offer parent education.

Workshops educating parents on teen dating violence and the initial signs of abuse should be provided to the public. These workshops could be offered by the City of Tempe, non-profit organizations, and through local businesses, which would provide on-site classes to encourage employee participation.

3. Promote available resources.

Information on available resources, including workshops and groups on healthy relationships and communication, and dating violence intervention services could be included in schools' monthly newsletters and with student report cards. Flyers could be posted in establishments frequently visited by parents and youth, such as the public library. Links to available resources could be included on school web pages.

4. Establish or expand teacher and peer mentor programs.

Teacher/student and peer mentor programs should be established or expanded on school campuses as often youth experiencing problems are most comfortable seeking help at school. Teacher and peer volunteers could be educated on warning signs of dating violence so they can provide support and encourage students to seek professional assistance.

5. Establish “Dialogue Boxes” in school classrooms.

A dialogue box could be established in school home rooms or health classrooms where students could anonymously submit questions or concerns. The teacher would select questions to be discussed in the classroom setting, thereby giving students the opportunity to seek help or advice anonymously.

Preventing Dating Violence - 1

**Facilitators: Kecia Walsh
Matt Cicinelli**

**City of Tempe – Community Services
Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Rebecca Benitez
Celina Castelli
Alberto Hernandez
Heather Hull
Sarah King
Andrew Johnston
Jovanka Maksimovic
Shannon McCutcheon
Leonard Pacheco
Emma Pew
Ramarion Sallee

Connolly Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Tempe High School
Tempe High School
Tempe Preparatory Academy
Kyrene Middle School
McClintock High School
Tempe Youth Leadership – Tempe YMCA
Compadre High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Classical Kids Academy

Adult Participants

Gail Bird
Brandon Tarlowski
Martha Cronin
Bill Graham
Jolie Graybill
Stephen Hazel
Jessica Luchenta
Dee Dee Mason
Megan Pepple

First Congregational Church of Tempe
Tempe Social Services - YouthWorks
Tempe Community Council
Tempe High School & Tempe South Rotary
University of Arizona 4-H Youth Development
Tempe Schools Credit Union
Peer Solutions, Inc.
Parents Anonymous
Peer Solutions, Inc.

Preventing Dating Violence - 2

Discussion Summary:

Dating violence was defined by our group as one person using physical, sexual, or emotional abuse to gain power and maintain control over the other person in a relationship. Dating violence crosses all racial, economic, and social lines. Teen dating violence may be underreported because teenagers are not experienced in dating relationships and may not recognize the often subtle initial signs of violence. Teenagers can choose better relationships when they learn to identify the early warning signs of an abusive relationship, understand that they have choices, and believe they are valuable people who deserve to be treated with respect. Sources of information can include parents and family, schools, religious communities, media, and community resources.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a media and advertising theme of “RESPECT.”

Posters, flyers, brochures, advertising on city buses and/or bus stops, public service announcements, and local television programming (such as Tempe’s Street Beat) could focus on the theme of respecting yourself, respecting others, and providing information about signs of violence and resources to get help.

2. Create peer mentoring groups within schools.

High school students could form clubs and/or drama groups that would connect with middle school students to provide information in a more relevant manner. Younger students may initially be more willing to talk to someone closer to their age rather than to a parent, teacher, or counselor.

3. Include web links on school web sites.

Links to community resources and information about dating violence (as well as many other relevant issues) could be included on each middle and high school web site.

4. Incorporate information in school curriculum.

Although it was recognized that it is difficult to add more information in school classes, it was felt that at least two or three days could be spent in health or physical

education classes providing more relevant and updated information about dating violence.

5. Offer parent education.

Offering courses through the City of Tempe's counseling program and Parks and Recreation could be a means of educating parents about the issues of teen dating violence. Parents may not be aware of the signs of violence, how to talk to their teens, or where to get additional help.

Preventing Dating Violence - 2

**Facilitators: Rebecca Bond
Steve Chang**

**City of Tempe – Community Services
Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Ashlei Baker
Lily Balasuriya
Elizabeth Coe
Amber Finley
Silvia Flores
Macy Hanson
Elliot Magruder
Andrew Masayestewa
Jessica Nagy
Megan Neel
John Price
Mario Zapien

Connolly Middle School
Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Escalante Community Center
McClintock High School
Corona del Sol High School
Tempe High School
Kyrene Middle School
McKemy Middle School
Kyrene Middle School
McClintock High School

Adult Participants

Gary Duplissis
Jeanna Klunk
Lonee Lona
Marlene Pontrelli
Juve Lopez
Michelle Reese
Rhonda Strack

Tempe Police Department
State Farm Insurance Company
Compadre High School
Tempe City Attorney’s Office
Kyrene Middle School
East Valley Tribune
Tempe Social Services – CARE 7

Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 1

Discussion Summary:

Through the media and personal contact we are very aware of the impact stereotyping and racial tension plays in our society. On a national as well as local level we have seen how stereotyping and strained race relations can result in violence and the death of innocent people. In the school setting, students who differ from the predominant group may feel rejected by their peers, alienated, unappreciated and disrespected. Our discussion focused on the relationships of different ethnic and socio-economic groups in our schools, communities, City and State. We can improve cultural awareness and knowledge and accept our differences through the following:

- *Dispel ignorance through education
- *Improve awareness through exposure and involvement
- *Celebrate and embrace diversity through organized efforts
- *Promote acceptance through role models (community leaders, sports figures and educators)

Recommendations:

1. Establish cultural awareness and diversity curriculum.

The promotion of understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures should be incorporated into existing curriculum at all grade levels and into school staff development.

2. Establish an Office of Cultural Diversity.

This office would be established by the City of Tempe and would assist in the promotion of cultural understanding/awareness and improving race relations within our schools and our community. The Office of Cultural Diversity would work closely with the Human Relations Commission. Funding would occur by the City of Tempe and corporate and private sponsorship.

3. Enhance diversity celebrations and cultural acceptance through City of Tempe Tempe schools collaboration.

On-going communication between the City of Tempe and Tempe schools regarding diversity issues, and partnering on diversity efforts, should occur. Multi-cultural fairs, unity clubs, diversity training, and community functions and gatherings should

be jointly publicized to enhance efforts within our community. The proposed Office of Cultural Diversity could coordinate these collaborative efforts.

4. Promote cultural sensitivity through media recognition and incentives.

Media recognition and incentives would motivate schools and their clubs to actively promote and maintain cultural sensitivity. Additional funds needed for these incentives could be provided by private organizations such as Key-Club and professional sports programs.

Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 1

**Facilitators: Tricia Gilman
Adam Swenson**

**City of Tempe – Community Services
Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Derrick Bighorse
Natividad Fuerte
Floyd Hardin III
Megan Holly
Melika Kuric
Robert Lopez
Carrie Morley
Marya Mtshali
Raquel Nuguid
Tonia Smith

McClintock High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Marcos de Niza High Schoolh
Corona del Sol High School
McClintock High School
Pinnacle High School
Fees Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School
Stand & Serve - Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Mercy Carreras
Mary Frances Lewis
Liz Lopez
Matthew Morales
Rosie Perez
Earnest Robinson

Tempe Social Services
TD #3 Governing Board
Tempe Rotary Club
Tempe Boys and Girls Club
Tempe Community Action Agency
Collins College

Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 2

Discussion Summary:

In today's society, youth sometimes form negative opinions of others based upon assumptions, rumors, or preconceived notions about groups of people or individuals that might have a different belief system because of their culture, religion, economic or social position. Sometimes the result of this stereotyping leads to violent behavior towards one another and creates an atmosphere of fear and hatred.

Our group identified that prejudice is often passed down from generation to generation. Students often obtain negative information from family members; which is why the communities and schools are so important in helping to solve this problem.

Education and communication are very important in working towards solving the problem of stereotypes and negative race relations. By exposing students in a positive way to various groups of people, they can learn to be respectful and have a greater understanding of one another.

Recommendations:

- 1. Establish unity days that celebrate diversity at all Tempe schools to ensure school-wide involvement.**

These celebrations would involve various school clubs that represent different cultures and customs. Music, food, entertainment and guest speakers from different cultures should be part of the unity day so it's appealing to students.

- 2. Create a student peer mentor program that promotes cultural awareness and acceptance.**

This could be a collaborative effort between high school administrator, student council members, and school unity clubs. Trained high school students would serve as mentors to elementary and middle school age students.

- 3. Establish a locally based "Anytown" or "Unitown" youth leadership program.**

Unitown and Anytown are currently only offered in Prescott, AZ and schools send a select number of students. Establishing a program in Tempe for middle and high school students that includes the Unitown/Anytown concepts of leadership development, diversity appreciation, prejudice reduction and human relations skills

would enable more students to take advantage of this training. Funding could occur through grants and business sponsorship.

4. Expand current citywide unity day festivals to involve youth or provide a youth-oriented unity festival.

The City's Martin Luther King Day celebration and Tardeada could be expanded to include more youth groups and clubs, or a youth-oriented unity festival could be considered. These events should be strongly promoted in high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools to encourage youth involvement. Advertising could occur through school and local newspapers, school announcements, general advertising, and parent newsletters.

5. Incorporate a diversity unit or group at all levels at all schools.

This unit or group would include age-appropriate materials to teach awareness, understanding and appreciation of differences.

6. Promote community service opportunities.

Community service opportunities and activities that expose high school and middle school students to different cultures and beliefs could be developed and promoted. This could occur through school administrations, school clubs and the City's volunteer services.

Addressing Stereotypes and Race Relations - 2

**Facilitators: Leah Sergeant
Danielle Castelli**

**City of Tempe – Community Services
Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Ellen Aiken
Chris Brown
Erika Devine
Dovar Flores
Lisa Helmers
Andrea Naylor
Cassandra Ogletree
Brandon Phillips
Veronica Ruiz
Cami Tapernoux
Ryan Tunney
Janice Voegtlin
Andre Wood

Corona del Sol High School
Tempe Boys and Girls Club
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School
Kyrene Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Classical Kids Academy
Marcos de Niza High School
Escalante Community Center
Fees Middle School
Tempe High School
Pinnacle High School
Compadre High School

Adult Participants

Dennis Cahill
Marilyn Glenny
Val Ilg
Zita Johnson
Herb Smith

Tempe City Council
TD #3 Governing Board
Arizona State University Student
City of Tempe Human Relations Commission
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Dept.

Preventing Teen Suicide - 1

Discussion Summary:

Our group began with a discussion of the current statistics on teen suicide and the stresses that lead teens to consider such a permanent solution to an often temporary problem in their lives. Suicide is an outcome of untreated depression and is particularly tragic since help is generally nearby. However, help is either not offered, because a problem isn't perceived by others around the individual involved, or is kept hidden by the person themselves, often because of the stigma or shame attached to seeking help. The dual importance of recognition of the signs of depression, and of how to respond effectively, was agreed on by all.

It was also felt that considerably more needs to be done to increase awareness in the schools regarding this problem. Students in our discussion group felt that even in those schools where programs and information currently exist, awareness of them by large numbers of students and faculty is seriously lacking. Often there is a lot done after a suicide incident occurs, but then things soon lapse back into 'business as usual'. Our group felt that education needs to target everyone - board members, administration, faculty, parents, and students. The following recommendations were made:

Recommendations:

1. Provide a full-time mental health professional for each middle and high school .

This person would provide the leadership and coordination for all education/awareness programs and initiatives at all levels of the school community with respect to teen mental health needs.

2. Establish regular presentations for all levels of the school community, including outreach to teens that have dropped out of school.

Regular presentations aimed at increasing awareness of depression and suicide should be provided at all levels of the school community. Such presentations could include skits, assemblies, speakers, and flyers, etc. The full-time mental professional recommended above, or current school based counselors and school faculty, could coordinate this.

3. Offer school faculty training.

Inservice training for all faculty in the recognition of, and ways to handle, teen depression and suicide should occur. Training could involve outside agencies and services which are often available at no or minimal cost.

Preventing Teen Suicide - 1

Facilitators: Peter Rennick City of Tempe – Community Services
Cheyenne Rightmire Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Jessica Berg	Fees Middle School
Nicole Cabrera	McClintock High School
Karlo Carvajal	McClintock High School
Bridgette Esquer	Compadre High School
Sara Lacher	Kyrene Middle School
Brianne Sheets	Marcos de Niza High School
Megan Smith	Tempe Boys and Girls Club
Evan Yu	Tempe Youth Leadership – Tempe YMCA

Adult Participants

Sarah Ghazi	Governor’s Community Policy Office
Dana King	Tempe Community Action Agency
Nancy McCullah	First Congregational Church of Tempe
Robyn Ramseyer	Tempe YMCA – Youth Leadership Program
Rebecca Sauer	East Valley Catholic Social Services
Janet Sunderland	Escalante Community Center

Preventing Teen Suicide - 2

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion focused on the increasing teen suicide rate and the big problem it is in Arizona. Group participants discussed why they thought more teens were choosing to end their lives and had specific ideas as to why this is occurring. The identified reasons were:

- Stress
- Verbal and/or physical abuse
- Feeling trapped
- Lack of self-pride
- Mental issues
- Legitimizing death and violence (through the media)
- Access to guns
- Need to be perfect
- Loss or break-up of a relationship
- Loss of a dream

The group identified that there is lack of knowledge on when someone should intervene and what to do to help someone who is feeling suicidal. Students verbalized that they felt teachers are especially unaware of the signs of seriously depressed students. They were also very vocal in their idea that their world is much more stressful than adults realize.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a City-Sponsored Youth Suicide Prevention Committee.

A number of suggestions involved activities that the youth felt they were capable and willing to take a lead in designing and carrying out. These activities include developing a local website with links for people needing information and referrals for suicidal family members or friends, educate teens and the public on the problem, lobby the legislature to provide more funding to support positive teen activities, and advertise the availability of current resources in the community. The group would like the City to support the development of a committee what would be youth-led and task-driven.

2. Promote Existing Resources.

Youth in this group were unaware of many of the resources currently available to them for information about suicide and how to help friends who may be suicidal. They also had some misperceptions about making anonymous calls to suicide hotlines. The group decided that there is a great need for accurate information on all

middle school and high school campuses, in movie theaters, recreation centers, the library, and fun parks.

3. Establish a Peer Mentor Program.

The group recommended that students be trained to listen to each other and help each other seek help. Teens would be educated on the warning signs and how to help their peers seek professional assistance. They could be supervised by the City's prevention counselors on each of the high school campuses.

4. Letter to State Legislature.

The importance of State support for youth surfaced several times. Youth, especially, perceived that the State of Arizona does not put a high priority on helping young people. They specifically suggested that the City draft a letter requesting the State of Arizona to reprioritize funding to give youth activities, including non-competitive sports and clubs, a higher level of consideration.

Preventing Teen Suicide - 2

**Facilitators: Lynette Stonefeld
Katie Butler**

**Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Marquette Bycura
Holly Camou
Princess Cazzaly
Arnold Fimbres
Gabriel Freeman
Santa Maria Groves
Cydney Grogan
Tyler Halter
Brandi Kennon
Nira Lee
Michelle Nunez
Brittany Shank

Kyrene Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Classical Kids Academy
Marcos de Niza High School
McClintock High School
Tempe High School
Tempe Preparatory Academy
Pinnacle High School
Escalante Community Center
McKemy Middle School
Compadre High School
Corona del Sol High School

Adult Participants

Pamela Coleman
Debra Gomez
Slade Mead
Gary Sanders
Laurene Simms
Genett Tomko

Tempe Community Council
Tempe Elementary School District No. 3
Kyrene School District Governing Board
Mill Avenue Merchants Association
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Dept.
Parents Anonymous

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission would like to extend a special thanks to the Tempe Rotary Club.

Their generous donation to Youth Town Hall 2002 helped make this event a success.