

City of Tempe

**Mayor's Youth Advisory
Commission**

Youth Town Hall Report

2003



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,

**Adam Swenson, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2002/2003 Officers**

Sasha Redman
Chairperson

Britney Griggs
Administrative Recorder

Celina Castelli
Treasurer

Sulaiman Stephens
Student Government Day Chairperson

Adam Swenson
Youth Town Hall Chairperson

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
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Eric Blake
James Blake
Anna Bethancourt
Celina Castelli
Jared Cripe
Britney Griggs
Rebecca Hudson
Danny Kunz
Jessica Mai
Stacey Norgren
Sasha Redman
Jenna Robbins
Nathaniel Spielberg
Sulaiman Stephens
Adam Swenson
Maycie Thornton
Tiffany Veschio
Elizabeth Watson
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

Adam Swenson

Youth Town Hall Chairperson

April 23, 2003

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-third year to sponsor Youth Town Hall, which was held Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at the Westside 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 **Evening and Weekend Activities for Teens**, while two other groups discussed **Promoting Positive Body Image**. The remaining two groups addressed **Enhancing Youth Employment and Career Planning**.

After a welcome by Mayor Neil Guiliano, and a keynote address by Miss Arizona Laura Lawless, 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, April 23, 2003
Westside Community Center
715 West Fifth Street

- 8:15 - 8:45** **Registration** Front of Westside Community Center
Continental Breakfast served
- 8:45 - 9:20** **Opening Session** Westside Community Center Gymnasium
- Introduction -Sasha Redman, MYAC Chair
- Welcome - Mayor Neil Giuliano, City of Tempe
- Keynote Address - Laura Lawless, Miss Arizona
- Instructions - Adam Swenson, Youth Town Hall Chairperson, 2003
- 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** - "Evening and Weekend Activities For Teens 1"
 Westside Community Center – Education/Resource Room
- Committee B** - " Evening and Weekend Activities For Teens - 2"
 Westside Community Center – Teen Room
- Committee C** - "Promoting Positive Body Image - 1"
 Westside Community Center – Sunset Room
- Committee D** - "Promoting Positive Body Image - 2"
 Westside Community Center – Riverside Room
- Committee E** - "Enhancing Youth Employment & Career Planning -1"
 Westside Community Center – Lindon Park Room
- Committee F** - "Enhancing Youth Employment & Career Planning - 2"
 Westside Community Center – Computer Lab
- 12:00 - 1:00** **Lunch** – Provided to all participants at the Westside Community Center
 Catered by College Street Deli
- 1:00 – 1:55** **Committee Sessions Resume - Discussion Wrap-Up**
- 2:00 - 2:30** **Closing Session** – Westside Community Center Gymnasium
- Committee Summaries
- Each committee representative will give a 3 to 5 minute summary.
 - Closing Remarks – Adam Swenson, Town Hall Chairperson

Evening and Weekend Activities for Teens - 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group began by identifying activities that teens are typically involved with and how these activities are advertised. Activities include participating in school and athletic events, community projects, church programs, club and community center programs, attending movies and skate parks, working, shopping, and exercising. We discovered through our discussion that many times teens are not aware of the activities available to them. Our group then focused on why it is important to have an array of available teen activities. Too much free time for youth can lead to boredom, low motivation, risky behaviors such as substance abuse, theft, vandalism and other delinquent behaviors, as well as can contribute to depression and social anxiety. We ended our discussion by identifying avenues to enhance and promote teen activities.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a teen activities committee that focuses on existing activities and develops teen events.

This committee could consist of two student government participants from every middle and high school in Tempe or could be a subcommittee of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission. This group would partner with the City of Tempe Parks and Recreation, Social Services, Special Events, and Cultural Services to promote current activities and to develop quarterly citywide teen events. These quarterly events could be advertised through school newspapers, flyers, and classroom announcements. The committee would also be responsible for identifying creative ways to raise money to cover costs such as car washes, silent auctions, and corporate sponsorship.

2. Sponsor a "New Signature Teen Event" Contest.

Teens would develop and propose possible teen events through the contest and the winner's event would actually be produced. The recommended teen activity committee would be responsible for organizing this contest and selecting the winner. Corporate sponsorship of the contest and event could be explored.

3. Offer a Teen Activity Day at the City Community and Recreational Centers.

Teens would be given the opportunity on one day/evening to sample a variety of classes currently offered by the City of Tempe Parks and Recreation, Cultural Services and Social Services Divisions. This would expose larger numbers of teens to current activities and could increase their involvement.

4. Create a teen activities link on the City of Tempe's website.

City departments and community organizations would provide information on their upcoming teen-related events and activities that teens could easily access through the City's web site. The City of Tempe webmaster could be responsible for overseeing this web page link.

5. Implement more effective ways to advertise teen events, activities and classes.

In addition to a teen link on the City's website, our discussion group identified the following as effective ways to advertise activities/events to teens:

- Information booths at schools during lunchtime
- Flyers at favorite teen hangout spots (teen events, skate parks, malls, coffee shops, restaurants and bus stops)
- Ads at local movie theatres
- School newspapers.
- Teen radio stations

6. Create an Art Wall in downtown Tempe for teens.

This wall would display Tempe teen art and would also provide information about upcoming teen events. The Cultural Services Division could work with community artists and school art departments to construct the wall and to find an appropriate location on or around Mill Avenue in downtown Tempe. Upcoming teen events would be advertised and updated on the wall. Possible funding could occur through fundraising, grants, or corporate sponsorship.

Evening and Weekend Activities For Teens - 1

**Facilitators: Leah Sergeant
Rebecca Hudson**

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

Youth Participants

Nicole Bruno
Rosemary Chavez
Milinda Fatigoni
Jason Griffo
Leola Johnson
Eric Jones
Mary Klein
Erin Obr
Lindsay Tippett
Hilary Waterman
Leandra Williams
Thomas Zeimetz

Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School
Tempe High School
Tempe High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Tempe High School
McKemy Middle School
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School
Peggy Payne Academy
McClintock High School
McClintock High School

Adult Participants

Jacob Chavez
Shane Isabell
Amanda Nosbisch
Linda Spears
Shawn Wagner

Gililand Middle School / TD#3
City of Tempe Parks & Recreation
Peer Solutions, Inc.
East Valley Boys & Girls Club
Escalante Community Center

Evening & Weekend Activities for Teens –2

Discussion Summary:

Our group focused on providing low cost and easily accessible activities for teens in Tempe as an alternative to risky behaviors that teens can engage in when left on their own. We identified the following factors that contribute to teens with “nothing to do”:

- A lack of money
- A lack of transportation
- A lack of information
- A lack of available activities for youth 14-17 years

Our group determined that due to the above listed barriers, teens are often left with too much unsupervised time on their hands, which can lead to inappropriate or delinquent behavior.

Recommendations:

1. “Show up for a Show!” Offer teen-only concerts at Tempe Town Lake.

The same bands that give free concerts at area clubs could be invited, as teens love to hear these bands but do not feel safe in clubs where older age groups are drinking and would prefer their own music series to those that are already programmed for the general public. Advertising through the City of Tempe Activities Brochure, bands “street teams” (teens that pass out flyers at their high schools), and a teen web-site would bring in the teens. Parks and Recreation, Cultural Services and Social Services could coordinate these events, working with Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission members who would help choose the bands.

2. “See the Stars Under the Stars.” Provide a teen-only outdoor movies program at Kiwanis Park.

This movie series for teens between ages 14 and 19 could be held right after the “Movies in the Park” program. There could be movie theme nights such as Oldies Night (movies 1980 & earlier), Sci-Fi night, and Mystery Flicks. Community Services could implement and run the program working with Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission members. Concessions could be sold to help recoup expenses. This would provide a fun, free or inexpensive, and safe social experience for teens.

3. Offer monthly “Gym Nites” at the Recreation Centers.

Once a month a theme oriented gym night at Kiwanis Recreation Center and Escalante Community Center could be provided for teens. Some suggestions included hiring a D.J.

& have dance lessons such as hip-hop and '80's. Have open mic night w/ karaoke and/or teen comedy night, giving local teens a chance to perform before their peers. Concessions could be sold to help off set costs. This would provide a safe, entertaining social evening out for ages 14-19. The Parks and Recreation and Social Services Divisions within the City could implement this program.

4. Create an “Art Avenue” to display teen art.

The Art Avenue would be a display area at gym events so teens can display their own art, ceramics, painting, poetry and music. Participation certificates could be awarded. However, our groups did not want this to become a competition. “Art Avenue” would be a venue for artistic expression for local high school age teens. Parks and Recreation, Cultural Services and Social Services could coordinate with local teens. Our group suggested both Kiwanis Recreation Center and Escalante Community Center as sites to host displays.

5. Develop a teen link on the City of Tempe’s website.

Most teens in our group were unaware that there is a Parks and Recreation web site for City of Tempe. They would like their own web site (www.tempe.teens.gov) that would contain a calendar of events, and allow easy access. The Parks and Recreation, Social Services, and Cultural Services Divisions could be asked to keep the site up-dated. The web site could be advertised on City buses.

6. Expand Marketing of Available Teen Activities.

In addition to a teen website, members of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission could interact with Social Services, Cultural Services, and Parks and Recreation to help get information out to the schools through their clubs, and other school organizations.

7. Offer Accessible Transportation.

Teens would like to be able to get special bus passes to attend City sponsored weekend activities. They could use their school I.D. as a pass between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to midnight. This could be coordinated with the City of Tempe Transportation Division.

Evening and Weekend Activities For Teens – 2

**Facilitators: Lynda Myers
Danny Kunz**

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

Youth Participants

George Dominguez
Maria Flores
Ryan Frazier
Jessica (JJ.) Krueger
Kristen Rose Lee
Mikkel Myers
Ashlee Nettles
Hannah Rosen
Jesus Suenaga
Lauren Wolchik

Tempe High School
Escalante Community Center
Connolly Middle School
Marcos de Niza High School
Fees Middle School
McKemy Middle School
Marcos de Niza High School
Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School
Corona del Sol High School

Adult Participants

Rosie Perez
Donald Price
Valorie Smith

Janet Sunderland

Tempe Community Action Agency
First Congregational Church of Tempe
City of Tempe Parks & Recreation
Division
Escalante Community Center

Promoting Positive Body Image – 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group defined body image as how we perceive our physical appearance as well as how we think others perceive us. Body image is heavily influenced by cultural and social factors and is closely connected to self-esteem. Group discussion focused on the following:

- The media plays a strong role in shaping ideas about how teens “should” look. There is significant pressure to conform to an idealistic, but unrealistic body type. Dieting, eating disorders, cosmetic surgery, nutritional supplements, and steroid use are common, but dangerous methods which teens resort to.
- Schools focus on issues such as violence and drugs, but do not generally address body image as an issue.
- School policies such as dress code enforcement and the types of food offered to students are important issues to teens and can be connected to body image.

It was agreed that the problems of body image are both personal and cultural, thus making it difficult to recommend specific solutions. With more awareness, and an integration of strategies that include schools, parents, peers, and the wider community, it is hoped that teens will begin to find more value in their character and accomplishments than in their appearance.

Recommendations:

1. Promote existing resources.

Clubs that emphasize tolerance, diversity, and respect (such as Stand and Serve), programs that promote healthy lifestyles (as offered through the City Parks and Recreation Department), and curriculum (such as Asset Building sponsored by the Arizona Ecumenical Council), already exist, but may not be well known or utilized. Schools could raise awareness through announcements and special events.

2. Incorporate body image issues into the school curriculum.

Health, physical education, and family and consumer science classes would be logical courses to increase awareness about body image issues.

3. Improve food choices for students.

Schools should seek vendors to provide healthier food options for students. Additionally, the nutritional content of food should be prominently posted so students may better evaluate their choices.

4. Place magazines and other reading materials that promote positive body image in school offices and city waiting rooms.

Provide a variety of magazines that reflect diversity, healthy lifestyles, etc. Display pamphlets that provide information about activities, organizations, and events that promote positive body image.

Promoting Positive Body Image - 1

**Facilitators: Rebecca Bond
Sasha Redman**

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

Youth Participants

Renee Acuna
Cecilly Columbus
Tawny Gamboa
Cody Guy
Courtney Heiser
Frances Liao
Katherine Naegele
Truong Pham
Jeanette Reidhead
Matthew Warren
Morgan Weese

Escalante Community Center
Compadre High School
Kyrene Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Peggy Payne Academy
Tempe High School
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School
Fees Middle School

Adult Participants

Gail Bird
Mercy Carreras
Jo Hanken
Melanie Dobson Hughes
Zita Johnson
Sherri Travisano

First Congregational Church of Tempe
City of Tempe Social Services Division
Kyrene Middle School
Dayspring United Methodist Church
TUHSD Governing Board
Tempe Elementary School District No. 3

Promoting Positive Body Image – 2

Discussion Summary:

Our group discussion first focused on how society promotes body image in magazines, television and the movies. Many actors, athletes, musicians, models and other public figures portray unrealistic body image standards. The pressure to look a certain way can lead to poor self-esteem and depression. In turn, a number of unhealthy, risky, and even life threatening behaviors can occur, including poor eating habits, over-exercising, a reliance on steroids and over-the-counter diet products and eating disorders. Our group identified that body image begins at a young age, and that we need promote healthy ways of eating and exercising, and to be happy with who you are and not what you look like.

Recommendations:

1. Create family workshops for parents, teachers, and children to promote positive self-esteem.

These workshops could be provided by Tempe Social Services, the Tempe schools, and outside organizations. The workshops would focus on how the media unrealistically portrays body image, increasing self-esteem within the family, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

2. Promote healthier foods in the school and social venues vending machines.

The vending machines at schools and public venues (i.e. swimming pools, community centers, malls, entertainment locations) could provide a more nutritious choice of beverages (such as V8 Splash drinks, Ocean Spray juices, and water) rather than primarily soda and a better choice of foods products (such as granola bars, trail mix, and wheat bars) rather than primarily candy bars and potato chips. The schools and City could work with vendors to provide healthier foods at their sites.

3. Endorsement of positive body image by prominent figures in our community.

Youth look up to prominent figures. Students, schools and city staff could work with the ASU athletic department, the Cardinals football team, and the California Angels baseball team to have positive athletes participate as guest speakers at school assemblies, teen-attended events, and/or a forum promoting healthy choices and positive body image.

4. Provide peer education and support.

Peers can be the biggest influence on each other. Students, in collaboration with the school district counselors, teachers, and other counseling specialists, could assist in developing and promoting after-school activities, peer sessions, and “life skills” groups. The discussions and specialized activities would be directed at promoting teens to feel good about who they are and not what they look like. The activities could be supported through fundraising events or possibly through grants.

Promoting Positive Body Image - 2

**Facilitators: Kecia Walsh
Celina Castelli**

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

Youth Participants

Ruben Duran
Brittany Frazier
Katie Griffo
Tiffany Hubbard
Jessica Irwin
Brianna Lopez
Megan Neel
Kristen Schalliol
David Vu

Marcos de Niza High School
Gililand Middle School
Tempe High School
Tempe High School
Fees Middle School
Compadre High School
McKemy Middle School
McClintock High School
Tempe Boys & Girls Club

Adult Participants

Alison Bruening
Louise Eldredge

Katherine Kennedy
Lonee Lona
Cathi Marks
Michaela Mirkovich

Lynette Stonefeld

Community Bridges
TUHSD Adolescent Pregnancy &
Parenting Program
Peer Solutions, Inc.
Compadre High School
City of Tempe Social Services Division
TUHSD Adolescent Pregnancy &
Parenting Program
Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools

Enhancing Youth Employment and Career Planning – 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion began by identifying obstacles to youth employment. These include:

- Age restrictions
- Conflicts between school and employment schedules
- Lack of public and personal transportation
- Lack of training and experience
- Limited availability of jobs
- Disconnect between youth and employers
- Lack of job seeking skills

We then identified that many youth are not aware of the resources available to them and that there is also a need for more effective ways to advertise job openings and existing employment assistance programs.

Recommendations:

1. Promote youth employment opportunities on the high school campuses by providing a job advertisement board.

The City's Youth Employment Program in partnership with the high school career counselors could provide job advertisement boards on school campuses to provide youth timely information on employment opportunities.

2. Sponsor job clubs on the high school campuses.

These school job clubs could invite City employees and local business people to speak about future career opportunities and could also be involved in maintaining the job advertisement boards recommended above. The City of Tempe Youth Employment Program, high school career counselors, and students could coordinate these clubs.

3. Offer a pilot volunteer and work-study program on one high school campus.

This pilot program would contain three components: 1) Volunteer opportunities developed with local businesses that would provide exposure and training to a variety of jobs. These volunteer positions could lead to future employment based upon availability. 2) A work-study program and/or career camps which could be developed with large

companies (i.e., Intel, Basha's) to provide training and mentoring in a specific career, and 3) the City's Youth Employment Program which could be utilized for job development and referrals to regular employment. This program could be staffed by the City of Tempe, local schools and could be funded through grants or donations by local companies.

4. Advertise and promote City transportation.

Bus cards and routes could be advertised in places frequented by youth (i.e., movie theaters, at school, or on TV). To promote bus usage, low cost bus cards could be provided to businesses that employ youth, and tax incentives could be offered to these businesses for taking part in clean air activities.

Enhancing Youth Employment and Career Planning - 1

**Facilitators: Brandon Tarlowski City of Tempe – Community Services
Sulaiman Stephens Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Carlos Bello
Antoinette Cauley
Corey Dillier
Richard Farrah III
Tony Goodthunder
Whitney Heudorf
Tiffany Hinchey
Tara Matchler
Gary Ruiz

Escalante Community Center
Tempe Boys & Girls Club
Marcos de Niza High School
Tempe High School
Tempe High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School
Corona del Sol High School

Adult Participants

Bianca Betancourt
Meg Burton Cahill
Kay Cosner
Pat Hatton
Dana King
Jeanna Klunk
Peter Rennick

City of Tempe YouthWorks Program
Arizona State House of Representatives
21st Century Learning Center – MDN
Former City of Tempe Councilmember
Tempe Community Action Agency
State Farm Insurance Company
City of Tempe Social Services Division

Enhancing Youth Employment and Career

Planning - 2

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group identified the lack of job opportunities in our community as an obstacle to teen employment. The group also discussed the need for more opportunities to learn about future careers through observation, career interviews, and internships. The problems are identified as follows:

- Lack of job opportunities for teens
- Lack of /or cost of transportation to jobs
- Lack of experience to apply for job openings
- Lack of job seeking skills knowledge

Our group also identified that there are programs available in our community that need to be advertised more extensively. In fact, many participants became aware of existing programs for the first time through our group discussion process.

Recommendations:

1. Provide free or reduced bus passes for working teens.

A free or reduced bus pass specifically for teens that have a job would help them get to their jobs. This would also encourage more use of the bus system by teens and promote clean air. Incentives could be given to businesses that purchase bus passes for their teen employees.

2. Increase Business Involvement

Invite businesses to attend brown bag discussion at the high schools to assist teen with finding jobs; encourage recruitment for open positions on campus. Have business leaders come in for career discussions/information. The City of Tempe in partnership with the high school guidance departments would coordinate these services.

3. Provide a comprehensive informational booklet on job seeking skills.

This information would include tips on writing resumes, cover letters, interviewing skills, thank you notes, and other skills necessary to compete in today's job market. This information would be available at all high school Career centers in paper form, on a disk, CD and by e-mail. Donations from the business community could be sought to underwrite the cost of producing the printed materials and providing the CD's to students.

4. Advertise services provided by the City of Tempe Youth Employment Program.

Job Skills workshops could be held after school on campus. These workshops could be scheduled at the different high schools on a monthly basis. A job board could be posted at the high school career centers advertising openings available through this service. The City of Tempe Youth Employment Program in partnership with the high school guidance departments could provide this service at no cost.

5. Advertise Job Openings in School Newspapers

Encourage businesses to advertise teen jobs in the high school newspapers. This would give teens more information on where to apply for jobs. Student newspaper staff could market the business community to place help wanted ads in their campus publications.

