

City of Tempe

**Mayor's Youth Advisory
Commission**

Youth Town Hall Report

2005



Dear Mayor and City Council:

This has been another exciting year for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC). 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. 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 by participating in a mock City Council meeting.

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

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,

**Taylor Walton, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2004/2005 Officers**

**Anna Bethancourt
Chairperson**

**Dan Haggemuller
Vice Chairperson**

**Vanessa Trinidad
Administrative Recorder**

**Tiffany Veschio
Treasurer**

**Charlesa Stoglin
Student Government Day Chairperson**

**Taylor Walton
Youth Town Hall Chairperson**

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2004/2005 Members**

**Arianna Acosta
Logan Bellew
Jesse Bradbury
James Blake
Ramond Calvert
Celina Castelli
Dominique Dennis
Andrea Eller
Rebecca Gammage
Oliver Howard
Tiffany Kintigh
Jordan Messacar
Katelyn Murphy
Desiree Olague
Nathaniel Spielberg
Anthony St. George**

Tempe City Council

Mayor

Hugh Hallman

Vice Mayor

Mark Mitchell

Council Members

Ben Arredondo

Barbara Carter

Leonard Copple

Pam Goronkin

Hut Hutson

Tempe Youth Town Hall

Chairperson's Report

Presented by

Taylor Walton

Youth Town Hall Chairperson

March 30, 2005

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 offer recommendations for practical solutions.

This was Tempe's twenty-fifth year to sponsor Youth Town Hall, which was held Wednesday, March 30, 2005 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 **School Violence and Safety** and two other groups discussed **Teen Sexual Pressure**. The remaining two groups addressed **Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Abuse**.

After a welcome by Mayor Hugh Hallman, and a keynote address by Miss Arizona Katherine Kennedy, participants met in their group. They began discussion of their assigned topics 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 one another.

The Youth Town Hall Report is available to various agencies, organizations, schools and service clubs for review and as a planning tool in our community. Youth Town Hall provides 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 30, 2005
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 -Anna Bethancourt, MYAC Chairperson
- Welcome - Mayor Hugh Hallman, City of Tempe
- Keynote Address - Katherine Kennedy, Miss Arizona
- Instructions - Taylor Walton, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
- 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 - "School Violence & Safety - 1"**
 Westside Community Center – Los Vecinos
- Committee B - "School Violence & Safety - 2"**
 Westside Community Center – Computer Lab
- Committee C - "Teen Sexual Pressure - 1"**
 Westside Community Center – Sunset Room
- Committee D - "Teen Sexual Pressure - 2"**
 Westside Community Center – Riverside Room
- Committee E - "Over-the-Counter & Prescription Drug Abuse -1"**
 Westside Community Center – Lindon Park Room
- Committee F - "Over-the-Counter & Prescription Drug Abuse - 2"**
 Westside Community Center – Art Room
- 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 – Taylor Walton, Town Hall Chairperson

School Violence & Safety – 1

Discussion Summary:

Participants in our discussion group began by identifying types of violence and some of the underlying factors that result in violence. Most students in our group felt relatively safe during school hours but not during after school activities. Discussion group participants were divided as to whether youth have too much freedom or not. They stated “We learn that violence is acceptable.” Our group also felt that violence in the media and video games helped shape youth perceptions that violence is okay. Violence on campus takes many forms. Our group identified the following top issues related to violence:

- Discrimination
- Uninvolved parents
- Cliques
- Bullying
- Fights
- Lack of extra curricular activities
- Not enough trusted adults to talk to.

Recommendations:

1. Increase communication between schools and parents.

Our group determined that increased parental involvement was the most critical element to increasing safety on campus. There needs to be more communication (especially face-to-face) between parents and school administration. Parents also need to know that their children need their support. Schools could hold a monthly parent meeting, send home regular behavior reports, and educate parents about youth violence and other problems through workshops, flyers and other forums.

2. Expand opportunities for celebrating diversity.

Celebrating diversity would help to decrease violence because it would encourage acceptance among students. Specific ways of celebrating diversity could include special recognition events such as a mandatory “Awareness Day,” a Peace Week, diversity clubs, and mandatory student workshops on diversity.

3. Offer a variety of extracurricular activities for high school students.

Students could be surveyed to learn what they really would like to do and to establish more personalized types of activities. A requirement for graduation could be the involvement in at least one activity. This requirement could be flexible to include parenting classes for teen parents, work experience, and non-school activities such as community or church involvement.

4. Establish a system for youth to report problems on campus anonymously.

A confidential communication system should be set up on each school campuses that allow students to let adults know that there is a problem with violence and/or safety without fearing retaliation. Students could be surveyed to provide input into how to set up this system.

School Violence & Safety - 1

**Facilitators: Lynette Stonefeld
Anna Bethancourt**

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

Youth Participants

Johnny Beerling
Maria Bermudez
Elgin Caldwell, Jr.
Molly Francis
Mandy Gomez
Alan Harbottle
Tiffany Hinchey
Alyssa Lopez
Michael Malone
Emily Trusty

Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School
Escalante Community Center
Kyrene Middle School
Tempe Youth Leadership Program
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School
Gililland Middle School
Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School

Adult Participants

Joey Brudnock
Linda Cano
Emily Harris
Patricia Hillman
Jaron Neal
Cindy Olas
Susan Poole
Christina Tremaine

Tempe Police Department
City of Tempe Adapted Recreation
Tempe Elementary School District #3
Tempe Elementary School District #3
Boys & Girls Club-Tempe/Ladmo Branch
Compadre High School
Kyrene Middle School
Tempe Elementary School District #3

School Violence and Safety - 2

Discussion Summary:

Our group began with a discussion about the prevalence of school violence. Both middle and high school students in our group reported that they felt relatively safe on their school campuses. They are aware of the possibilities of serious violence such as shootings, but did not express fear and were not in favor of more stringent safety measures such as metal detectors. More prevalent, and of more concern, to students in our group were the issues of disrespect, verbal abuse, and bullying. These behaviors can escalate and lead to fighting or other problems with serious consequences. Our group felt that violence prevention and social skills programs should begin much earlier than middle school but should also be continued throughout middle and high school.

Recommendations:

1. Promote and expand existing programs and resources.

Clubs that emphasize tolerance, diversity, and respect (such as Stand and Serve and the Anti-Defamation League) and programs such as peer mediation and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program being piloted at Connelly Middle School already exist at some campuses. However these programs may not be well known or utilized at other schools. School boards could examine which programs are successful and encourage all schools to adopt them.

2. Establish Teen Courts at all middle and high schools.

Students could be trained by city and school staff to incorporate a peer program to deal with minor issues of conflict that occur at schools. Offenders may respond more positively to fellow students rather than to administrators.

3. Conduct individual school “youth town halls.”

Student council members and administrators could plan a school-wide youth town hall that addresses issues of disrespect, verbal abuse, and bullying. A wider cross section of students would be able to give input and explore solutions to these problems at their schools.

4. Provide teacher training in violence prevention.

With existing budgeted money and possible grant money, all teachers should receive extensive training in classroom management, conflict resolution, and sensitivity and awareness issues. Teachers are also victims of disrespect and verbal abuse. They need to have the skills to deal with the students responsible in a way that de-escalates the situation.

5. Offer more professional counseling resources.

School counselors are generally involved with scheduling and other tasks that do not allow them time to be available to individual students who might need someone to talk to. Additional counselors could also provide resources to teachers and parents who need guidance with an individual student. These counselors could also provide training to peer mediators and offer workshops on campus in subjects such as tolerance, respect, and conflict resolution.

School Violence & Safety – 2

**Facilitators: Rebecca Bond
Nathaniel Spielberg**

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

Youth Participants

Zarah Ahmend
Stevie Anderson
Kim Bistany
Nicole Margul
Briana Martinez
Annalisa Munoz
Kieran Noe
Abraham Vargas
Grant Walton
Erick Williams
Maria Zarate

McClintock High School
Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School
McClintock High School
Tempe High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Connolly Middle School
McKemy Middle School
Kyrene Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School

Adult Participants

Natalie Barela
Maxine Daly
Dale Frank
Bill Graham

Tawny Peralta
Dorothy Rasmussen
George Romero
Krystal Sawyer

Tempe YMCA
Arizona Department of Education
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Dept.
Maricopa County Juvenile Court - Teen
Court & Tempe High School
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Dept.
Tempe Elementary School District #3
City of Tempe - City Attorney's Office
Town of Queen Creek

Teen Sexual Pressure-1

Discussion Summary:

One of the main focuses of our group's discussion was defining teen sexual pressure and its consequences. Our group defined teen sexual pressure as any type actions, words and/or gestures that crosses someone else's personal boundaries and makes that person feel uncomfortable, obligated and threatened. Our group agreed that this is a common problem for teenagers. We also concluded that the media plays a significant role in influencing teens' behavior expectations. Last, we acknowledged that early onset of sexual behavior might be considered as a rite of passage for some youth and there is a clear double standard for young men and women.

Recommendations:

1. Campaign to change school district policies abstinence only sex education to a comprehensive sex education curriculum.

Sex education curriculums and policies in the public schools need to be updated and not just focus on abstinence. Students should be given factual, accurate, age appropriate information. This curriculum should be for students, teachers and parents. Youth groups and other community activists could campaign for these curriculum changes.

2. Provide technology based accessible information on teen sexual pressure.

Information on what is teen sexual pressure and how to address it could be provided on school websites and teen hotlines. Updated informational videos on teen sexual pressure could be created through school based projects. All information provided should be a collaborative effort between youth and adults.

3. Offer community education programs on teen sexual pressure.

Community based programs that provide information on teen sexual pressure could be offered at health fairs, and through community education workshops that use experts and peer guest speakers from local colleges and universities. Other youth/adult forums could also be developed to provide dialogue and information.

Teen Sexual Pressure - 1

**Facilitators: Lindsay Romasanta
Desiree Olague**

**Peer Solutions, Inc.
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

James Abel
Holly Bensen
Jeffrey Cooper
Amber Deatherage
Gercalynn Dukepoo
Jennifer Geele
Britney Griggs
Mariah Hoffman
Melissa Jackson
Lindsay Singleton

Marcos de Niza High School
Corona del Sol High School
Corona del Sol High School
Gililland Middle School
Compadre High School
Compadre High School
McClintock High School
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School - Stand & Serve
Tempe Youth Leadership

Adult Participants

Christine Bartlett
Mike Ettenberger
Zita Johnson
Dene Phillips
Leah Sergeant
Margaret Spicez

Communities for Kids
Compadre High School
TUHSD Governing Board
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Dept.
City of Tempe - Kid Zone
Girl Scouts of Arizona - Cactus Pine

Teen Sexual Pressure - 2

Discussion Summary:

Our group first defined verbal, emotional and physical types of sexual pressure. We then discussed how sexual pressure can vary at different ages and knowledge levels. The role of peers, parents, friends and media was also discussed. We also reviewed what is offered in current sex education and debated over what ages sex education should be provided in the schools and what materials should be covered. It was generally agreed that sex education videos and curriculum are outdated. Our group identified the following issues pertaining to teen sexual pressure:

- Lack of parent education;
- Lack of student education and knowledge;
- Youth wanting approval from peers; and
- Lack of communication, trust, and self-esteem.

Recommendations:

1. Provide updated sex education in the schools.

Sex education curriculums should be updated to be more relevant to today's youth. The updated curriculums need to be age appropriate and should be provided to elementary school, middle school and high school students. The high school curriculum should include information on abstinence, the emotional impact of teen sex, the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/questioning community, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and abortion. The curriculum should be provided in both English and Spanish.

2. Offer community based education and forums.

Volunteer community groups could be formed to provide parent and peer education and mediation (e.g., high school students present to middle school students) that allows open discussion about teen sexual pressure and how to handle it. Parents could be involved and taught how to initiate and handle conversations with their teens so as to not inadvertently pressure their child. These forums would allow parents and teens "safe" opportunities for open discussions about sex as well as provide different perspectives about the issues surrounding sexual pressure.

3. Promote awareness of teen sexual pressure through the media.

The local media could be used to provide public service announcements created by teens for teens on sexual pressure. A teen show could be created by teens and adult advisors and aired on Channel 11 that addresses teen sexual pressure and other teen issues. This show could include an online hotline for teens staffed by local volunteer groups of trained teens.

Teen Sexual Pressure - 2

**Facilitators: Hilary Cummings
Celina Castelli**

**Peer Solutions, Inc.
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Megan Abell
Nicholas Allred
Garfield Anderson
Amy Carr
Lauren McGill
Francesca Mirizio
Quoshia Moultrie
Sulaiman Stephens
Ultima Vasquez

McClintock High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Compadre High School
Corona del Sol High School
Kyrene Middle School
Tempe Youth Leadership Program
Tempe High School
McClintock High School
Tempe Accelerated High School

Adult Participants

Antria Andreou
Veronica Castillo
Kim Klaiber
Barbara Miller
Leslie Schwalbe

ASU - School of Social Work Intern
Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.
City of Tempe - Social Services
Maricopa County Attorney's Office
Arizona Department of Health Services

Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Abuse - 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group first focused on the abuse of over-the-counter medications and prescriptions. Drugs abused by youth include cold remedies, soma, steroids, painkillers, Ritalin, and other attention deficit/hyperactive disorder medications. We then identified the following factors as contributing to over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse:

- Easy accessibility and low cost of the medications,
- Lack of regulatory guidelines for over-the-counter drugs
- Decreased parental and other adult involvement during teen years;
- Unawareness by youth of the risks of use and abuse of these drugs;
- Peer pressure; and
- Social acceptance of using "legal" drugs.

We concluded that in order to effectively address over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse we need instituted consequences for abusers, community education, increased parental guidance and involvement, and prevention and intervention programming based on unbiased university research conducted in our community.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a mandatory program for youth caught abusing over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

The schools and City could create and enforce a mandatory program for students who are caught misusing and/or abusing over-the-counter and illegal prescription drugs at school or in the community. This program should require that both the youth and their parent(s) attend an educational workshop that would provide information on the signs and consequence of drug abuse, including over-the-counter and prescription drugs. The program could be funded by an "offender" fee paid by the youth or their parent.

2. Provide school based education on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse.

School staff and outside providers could provide interesting, informative education in the K-12 classrooms that increases knowledge about the signs, risks and consequences of abusing over-the-counter and prescription drugs. The schools could have designated substance abuse education days, and/or offer education during lunchtime activities and school assemblies. Red ribbon week would be an ideal time to offer this education. After-school programs could

also incorporate education on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse into their curriculums.

3. Promote research at Arizona State University on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse in our community.

Hard, factual eye-opening facts about over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse in Tempe are needed for effective community education and intervention programs. The City could work with ASU graduate programs to encourage research on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse in Tempe. Funding could occur through grants or as part of graduate students required research projects.

Over-the-Counter & Prescription Drug Abuse - 1

**Facilitators: Tricia Gilman
Dan Haggemuller**

**City of Tempe - Community Services
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Njeri Carlton-Carew
Katrina Finken
Natalie Gatz
Jason Lin
Tuesday Marquez
Shay McGrady
David Oberstein
Elizabeth Page
John Perrine
Krystal Sheppard

Marcos de Niza High School
Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School
Compadre High School
McClintock High School
Kyrene Middle School
Tempe Youth Leadership Program
Marcos de Niza High School
McKemy Middle School
Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Bob Blatz
Jennifer Drury

Valorie Smith

Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley
Town of Guadalupe, Youth & Youth Adult
Programs
City of Tempe - Recreation Division

Over-the-Counter & Prescription Drug Abuse -2

Discussion Summary:

Our group began by identifying over-the-counter and prescription drugs abused by teens. We then focused on how to prevent this abuse. Our group identified the following factors that contribute to over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse:

- Availability and accessibility of the drugs;
- Inexpensive to purchase and no limit on amounts (over-the-counter drugs);
- Peer pressure;
- Perceived positive results of use (i.e. stay awake to finish homework, or perform better if involved in team sports); and
- Belief that use is not harmful or addictive.

Our group felt that many youth are not aware of the harmful side effects of abusing over-the-counter and prescription drugs or the possibility that their abuse can lead to addiction. Our group also recognized that many youth's parents are unaware of their youth's abuse. Parents may inadvertently contribute to their youth's abuse by providing unneeded medications and by not closely monitoring household members' prescriptions. We concluded that there is a need for parents, teens and the community in general to be educated about the dangers of over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse.

Recommendations:

1. Sponsor an Awareness Week at local schools.

The City, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission, school districts and other organizations could sponsor an Awareness Week on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse. The week would include peer presentations, true-life case stories, student and parent educational workshops and teacher and security guard trainings. Promotion of the awareness week would occur through news releases, letters to parents by the schools, a kick-off event at Tempe Town Lake, and a proclamation by the Mayor.

2. Provide community education on over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse.

The City, school districts, Arizona State University, and the Arizona Department of Health Services could partner to provide community education workshops on over-the-counter drug and prescription abuse. These workshops would educate parents, students, teachers and the community on the emotional, psychological and physical effects of abusing these drugs.

3. Limit accessibility and distribution of over-the-counter drugs.

The City could pass an ordinance that requires lock up of over-the-counter drugs that are commonly abused by youth. Purchase of these items would require identification proving that the purchaser is at least eighteen years old or that a parent is present. Locking up these medications would reduce youths' accessibility to purchase or steal these drugs for abuse.

4. Establish a mandatory program for youth caught abusing over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

The schools, local law enforcement, and juvenile court should establish a mandatory "diversion" program for students caught misusing over-the-counter or prescription drugs. This program would hold youth accountable and provide education and intervention services. The youth and their parent(s) would be responsible for paying the "diversion program" fee which would partially fund the program.

5. Initiate drug and alcohol testing at schools.

Random drug testing for youth participating in athletics or special Clubs could be established at schools to identify users and provide treatment resources. The school could contract with an outside company to provide the drug testing.

Over-the-Counter & Prescription Drug Abuse - 2

**Facilitators: Shannon Williams
Oliver Howard**

**Boys & Girls Club-Tempe/Ladmo Branch
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Cindy Flores
Miguel Garcia
Quincy Hall
Natasha Hawley
Lauren Johnston
Samantha La Cava
Lenisse Polanco
Joseph Pongyesvia
Shareese Thatcher
Michael Wilson

Escalante Community Center
Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School
Marcos de Niza High School
Kyrene Middle School
Tempe Youth Leadership
Marcos de Niza High School
Compadre High School
McKemy Middle School
Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Nanette Lubin
Cliff Mattice
Kelly Straw
Janet Vaughn

Valley of the Sun United Way
City of Tempe - City Attorney's Office
Communities for Kids
City of Tempe - Escalante Community
Center

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission would like to extend a special thanks to the East Valley Boys and Girls Club - Tempe/Ladmo Branch. Their assistance in hosting this year's Youth Town Hall at the Westside Community Center contributed to the event's success.