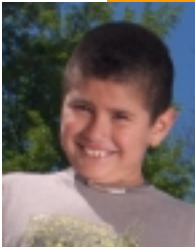




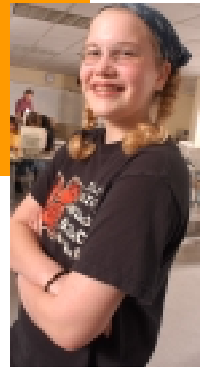
YOUTH LEADERSHIP

KENT COUNTY & BEYOND

DIRECTORY 2004 - 2005



Office of
Children, Youth & Families
Grand Rapids, Michigan



Kent Intermediate School District
Kent County, Michigan

Office of
Children,
Youth &
Families



Kent ISD
We Lead Learning

Welcome to the first edition of the *Youth Leadership: Kent County and Beyond Directory*. Thanks to a grant from the Urban Cooperation Board, you now have information to help you find leadership opportunities and begin to network with other youth boards throughout the region.

Young people want to have a voice on decisions that get made for their future. At a 2004 Regional Youth Summit planned and facilitated by youth with the Office of Children, Youth & Families and the Kent Intermediate School District, participants said they wanted to get involved with other youth and adults who had similar interests and were of diverse backgrounds. They wanted organized activities that would enrich their lives academically and socially and that would improve their world.

You'll find in this directory a clear and concise listing of local, state, and national organizations that encourage young people to get involved in important city and regional issues. Whether it is education, urban sprawl, the environment, leadership, community service, or whatever it takes to improve the quality of life for citizens, youth should be at the table and be active participants in the process.

Take a look! Find incredible leadership opportunities! Get energized! And make a positive difference in the world about you!

Yours truly,

Lynn Heemstra, Administrator
Office of Children,
Youth & Families

Michael Weiler, Superintendent
Kent Intermediate School District

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EDUCATION

City Wide Student Council

Student Council members from across Kent County meet regularly to update each other on school projects, exchange ideas and hear inspiring and instructive speakers on the various roles, duties and rewards of leadership.

Contact: Ben Wilkes, (616) 819-2935
Email: wilkesb@grps.k12.mi.us

GRPS Superintendent's Student Leadership Committee

Students attend a monthly meeting with the Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) Superintendent. Students are trained in leadership, attend lectures by leadership experts and discuss educational issues current in the district. School principals from each middle and high school in the GRPS system select two students for membership.

Website: www.grps.k12.mi.us
Contact: Holly Brady, (616) 819-2147
Email: bradyh@grps.k12.mi.us

Michigan Alternative Education Organization (MAEO) Stars

The Michigan Alternative Education Organization serves students in alternative schools. Leadership opportunities include a legislative day where students conduct a state-wide youth summit. Students may also take on leadership roles in fundraising efforts for DeVos Children's Charities, Robert's Family, food drives, creating and distributing personal care packets for The Bridge and Mel Trotter Missionaries. Students also participate in a school store, field trips, a senior trip as well as an end of the year trip. For more information, check with the local school district's alternative high school counseling department or go to the site listed below.

Website: www.maeo.org
Contact: Sharon Giglio, (248) 489-3827
Email: Sharon.Giglio@farmington.k12.mi.us

Student Representatives to GRPS Board of Education

Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) Student Representatives to the Grand Rapids Board of Education provide youth perspective during monthly board meetings and act as liaison to the City Wide Student Council and are automatically seated on the Superintendent's Student Leadership Committee. High school principals submit two juniors for consideration. They are then interviewed by members of the Grand Rapids Board of Education in September and begin their term in October.

Website: www.grps.k12.mi.us
Contact: Tara Rietberg, (616) 819-2197
Email: rietberg@grps.k12.mi.us

EDUCATION

The LOOP Afterschool Program

The LOOP offers elementary and middle school-aged youth academic support and enrichment activities in the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The LOOP also offers students a multitude of experiences from field trips to fine arts classes. Youth volunteer opportunities are available. Training required.

Website: www.grloop.org
Contact: Erica Curry, (616) 819-2165
Email: ecurry@grps.k12.mi.us

United Way's FACTS Tutoring Program

Families and Community Together for Students, or FACTS, is housed at Heart of West Michigan United Way and is contracted through the Grand Rapids Public Schools to recruit and train mentors for tutoring, mentoring and afterschool programs within the public schools.

Website: www.grps.k12.mi.us/Volunteers/FACTS.html
Contact: Jodie Brannum, (616) 819-2131
Email: brannumj@grps.k12.mi.us

SOCIAL CHANGE

Grand Rapids Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) provides funding for programs that address the needs of youth. Youth gain skills in leadership, philanthropy, responsibility, decision-making and volunteerism through community service. The Grand Rapids Community Foundation administers four other community foundations with Youth Advisory Commissions in Ionia, South-east Ottawa, Sparta and Wyoming.

Website: www.grfoundation.org
Contact: Cris Kooyer, (616) 454-1751
Email: ckooyer@grfoundation.org

Greater Grand Rapids NAACP Youth Council

The NAACP's Youth Council inspires and motivates interest in civic activities, provides young people with an understanding of pertinent issues, develops organizational skills for implementation of community-related activities and encourages active participation in these activities. The Council's activities include attending NAACP conventions, tutorial and life-skill programs, conducting voter registration drives and holding black history essay contests.

Website: www.NAACP.org
Contact: Kathi Harris, (616) 243-1300

SOCIAL CHANGE

Hispanic Center Youth Services

The Youth Services Leadership program works with Latino students ages 14 to 21 to develop their leadership, education and career goals in preparation for technical school or post-secondary education, military service or the workforce. This program involves community service, cultural awareness events, job shadowing and internships. Students are accepted after an application is filed and the student passes a basic skills test. Students with limited English proficiency are assisted through tutoring in English as a second language.

Contact: John Vega, (616) 742-0200, ext. 23

Email: jvega@hispanic-center.org

KidSpeak® Youth Forum - Grand Rapids

KidSpeak® is a forum that empowers youth to speak out in a public forum directly to decision-makers and community leaders who have a role and interest in improving public policies affecting young lives. This forum is sponsored by Michigan's Children, a statewide child advocacy organization, and facilitated by youth around the state. Grand Rapids' KidSpeak® is organized by the Office of Children, Youth & Families and the Mayor's Youth Council.

Contact: Shannon L. Harris, (616) 456-3558

Email: sharris@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us

Latino Youth Conference

The Latino Youth Conference is held annually to develop leadership among high school students in the Latino community and strengthen the sense of community among Latino youth in West Michigan. The conference supports meaningful connections between Latino youth and adults that lead to mentoring relationships.

Website: www.latinoyouthconference.org

Contact: Arturo Armijo, (616) 234-3904

Email: aarmijo@grcc.edu

Native American Community Services

Native American students participate in leadership development programs designed to encourage positive relationships between high school and elementary school-aged students. Older high school students read and interact with children in the Huron Potawatomi Head Start program. Students also operate service drives to assist homeless Native Americans in West Michigan.

Website: itcmi.org

Contact: Courtney Biggs, (616) 458-4078

Email: nacs@iserv.net

SOCIAL CHANGE

Racial Justice Institute — Racial Expressions: Youth in Action

Youth from various school systems plan an annual event to engage in dialogue, learn and share their ideas and feelings about racism and commit to action. Groups formed during the event meet all year long to continue dialogue and break down the walls of racism.

Website: www.graceoffice.org
Contact: Carissa Woodwyk, (616) 774-2042, ext. 120
Email: cwoodwyk@graceoffice.org

Yo Puedo

This leadership program serves Hispanic students in high schools and middle schools in Grand Rapids. Students participate in a year-long program designed to teach leadership skills, and Latino and bilingual pride. Students are recruited for membership annually in October.

Website: www.projectrehab.org
Contact: Angel Rodriguez, (616) 776-0891, ext. 213
Email: angelrodriguez@projectrehab.org

GOVERNMENT

Boards and Commissions - Grand Rapids and Kent County

High school juniors that are City of Grand Rapids residents may apply to serve on one of the City's fifteen boards and commissions. Junior and senior high schools students residing in Kent County also have an opportunity to serve one full school year on an appointed county board or commission. Applications are due in the fall.

Websites: www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=790
www.kentcounty.org/YourGovernment/BoardofCommision/default.htm
Contact: Kathy Black, (616) 456-3004
Kelly Berendsen, (616) 336-2869
Email: kblack@ci.grand-rapids.us
kelly.berendsen@kentcounty.org

GOVERNMENT

City of Grand Rapids - Mayor's Youth Council

The Grand Rapids Mayor's Youth Council is organized to actively involve 9th and 10th grade students on policy issues affecting them. The Council also broadens the scope of youth leadership in city affairs, promotes experiential learning on the functions of city government, develops healthy citizenry habits for the future of the community, and promotes public awareness of the strengths and abilities through youth forums and community service projects. Must be a City of Grand Rapids resident. Applications are due in September to the Office of Children, Youth & Families.

Website: www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=256
Contact: Shannon L. Harris, (616) 456-3558
Email: sharris@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us

City of Walker - Youth Commission

The City of Walker Youth Commission is organized to represent the concerns of youth within the City of Walker to the City Commission and its various boards and committees. Members are high school students entering grades 9 -12 that have an interest in learning about local government. The term of membership is one year, with an option to serve an additional year. The term of office is October 1 — August 30.

Website: www.ci.walker.mi.us
Contact: Cindy Mielke, (616) 453-6311
Email: cmielke@ci.walker.mi.us

Farmington/Farmington Hills Mayor's Youth Council

This Youth Council of thirteen members with two alternate members serves both Farmington and Farmington Hills and makes recommendations to each city's Council on the needs and concerns of youth. They also participate in various community service activities. Term is one year.

Website: www.ci.farmington-hills.mi.us
Contact: Todd Lipa, (248) 473-1891
Email: tlipa@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us

Michigan Municipal League

The Michigan Municipal League (MML) is a nonpartisan Michigan association of cities and villages that work to strengthen the quality of municipal government and administration. MML also connects municipalities with organizations that serve youth, other municipalities implementing youth programs, and make available MML-generated information regarding youth and government. MML also encourages municipalities to invite high school students to participate in their annual conference.

Website: www.mml.org/information/Youth/youthconnection.htm
Contact: Mary Charles, (734) 669-6300
Email: mcharles@mml.org

GOVERNMENT

Michigan Youth Caucus

The Michigan Youth Caucus gives Michigan citizens ages 15 - 22 a voice in public affairs at the state and local levels via web postings and internet discussions about policy issues.

Website: www.michiganyouthcaucus.org
Contact: Rebecca Bush, (269) 673-2161 ext. 3757
Email: rbush@alleganisd.org

Michigan Youth Symposium

The Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Recreation and Park Association host a Youth Symposium in January/ February for youth leaders from around the state to network, build leadership skills and develop strategies to overcome barriers.

Website: www.prr.msu.edu/baker/main.htm
Contact: Dr. Dwayne Baker, (517) 353-1590 ext. 115
Email: dbaker@msu.edu

National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Their Institute for Youth, Education, & Families (IYEF) helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of children, youth and families in their communities. The IYEF encourages youth participation in NLC activities and promotes the creation of youth councils to increase youth participation in local governance.

Website: www.nlc.org
Contact: Alicia Johnson, (202) 626-3046
Email: ajohnson@nlc.org

Zeeland Youth Council

Seven Youth Council members in grades 9-12 are appointed by the Zeeland City Council and meet once a month to discuss issues that affect them. In addition, the Council participates in various community service projects.

Website: www.ci.zeeland.mi.us
Contact: Nancy Tuls, (616) 772-6400
Email: clerk@ci.zeeland.mi.us

ENVIRONMENT

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)

GVMC has several youth based initiatives that involve young people in issues of land use and development as well as how to take action to improve the quality of life in the West Michigan area. The GVMC sponsors and invites youth presenters at the Annual Growing Communities Conference, encourages all its member communities to designate a youth representative to attend its meetings and invites schools to send student journalists to meetings to report on environmental issues in school newspapers.

Website: www.gvmc.org
Contact: Gayle McCrath, (616) 776-7613
Email: mccrathg@gvmc.org

Sierra Club - West Michigan Group

This grassroots club dedicated to saving endangered species and preserving the environment offers youth leadership opportunities to trained teens. Twice a month, adults and youth provide inner city kids experiences in hiking and canoeing and other nature-related activities.

Website: www.sierraclub.meetup.com/members/169
Contact: Craig Ressler, (616) 752-8551
Email: craig_ressler@yahoo.com

West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC)

WMEAC is a non-profit environmental advocacy and education organization that seeks to improve and preserve land use, transportation, water quality, sustainable business, environmental health, ecology, spirituality and green and open space. WMEAC offers volunteer and internship opportunities for high school students.

Website: www.wmeac.org
Contact: Lisa Locke, (616) 451-3051
Email: llocke@wmeac.org

BUSINESS

Junior Achievement of Michigan - Great Program

This in-school economics program offers students real world skills to understanding the principles and activities necessary to run a business successfully. Students are trained to become company officers with responsibilities to stock holders and employees. Students can obtain additional leadership training to present Junior Achievement fundamentals to grades K-4 through the Junior Achievement Volunteer Program.

Website: westmichigan.ja.org
Contact: Pat Wolf, (616) 575-9080, ext. 32
Email: pwolf@iserv.net

Grand Rapids Press Newspapers in Education Youth Advisory Board

Students in grades 10 - 12 who are interested in journalism, media, writing, or issue advocacy are invited to apply for the Youth Advisory Board. These students work with the Newspapers in Education Coordinator to review student writings submitted for publication in the Grand Rapids Press. Student board members also provide feedback on youth issues in the community, review the quality of newspaper coverage and act as ambassadors from the newspaper to the youth community. Youth Advisory Board members may also be assigned topics to cover. Students are recruited and selected by a group of local teachers. Students serve for one year.

Website: www.grpress.com\nie
Contact: Hilary Angie (616) 222-5290
Email: hangie@grpress.com

This directory was funded by a grant from the Urban Cooperation Board in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Kent Intermediate School District.

Contents of this directory were assembled in the spring of 2004 through researching public directories, distributing a survey to Kent County schools, and referrals from the Michigan Municipal League and other organizations that offer youth leadership opportunities.



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of Children, Youth, & Families
300 Monroe, N.W. Room 493
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 456-4353
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Mission: The Office of Children, Youth & Families evaluates public policy and promotes caring partnerships to ensure our children, youth and families thrive within the Grand Rapids community and hold promising futures.



Kent ISD
We Lead Learning

Kent Intermediate School District
2930 Knapp, N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
(616) 364-1333
www.kentisd.org

Mission: The mission of Kent ISD is to strengthen communities by providing leadership for learning. We accomplish this through innovative partnerships, technology, training, professional development and research.