

Pomona Youth Advisory Committee

Who We Are

As the official youth advisory committee for the City of Pomona; we outreach to Pomona youth to identify unmet needs of youth, advocate youth policies, organize youth in community service learning activities, and partner with civic, community and school groups to organize local youth led civic events.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Pomona Youth Advisory Committee is to create a strong voice for youth who are interested in becoming leaders through governance and civic learning. We engage youth and young adults to participate in city wide activities that improve themselves and their community.

What we do

The Pomona Youth Advisory Committee meets the first Monday of the month and is governed by the Brown Act. The Pomona Youth Advisory Committee's "Youth In Government" training program meets the remaining Mondays offering leadership, public presentation, facilitation training plus organizes youth civic engagement activities under the following committees:

1. **Cultural Peace Committee**- promotes activities for cultural understanding and racial unity.
2. **Youth In Government Committee**- implements activities to educate youth on voting, voter registration and event.
3. **Resources for Youth Committee**- supports the Youth and Family Master Plan development and implementation.

Accomplishments (2003-Present)

- Conducted Peace Quilt project involving 400 Pomona Youth in partnership with Project LEADS.
- Produced the MLK Non Violence Video project with Cal-Poly Pomona University Students.
- Participated in Project Sister's Educational Video "Fall Out" on Date Violence Prevention.
- Trained as Cultural Diversity Conflict Mediators under the Colorful Flags program.
- Advocated for the development and implementation of the Youth and Family Master Plan.
- Organized 2 voter education events and 2nd annual Youth In Government event with City Clerk.
- Organized the Pomona Youth Leadership Network Luncheon with 75 youth and adult mentors.
- Organized 22 youth to attend Western States Youth to Youth Summit. (www.youthtooyouth.net)
- Recipients of the 2007 John Anson Ford Award by the LA County Human Relations Commission.

Benefits of Involvement

- Civic leadership training and job experience on how local governments operate.
- **If appointed** you receive monthly stipend after completing 16 hours of community service.
- For volunteers not officially appointed you can complete required community service hours.
- Access to scholarship information, educational and job opportunities.
- Letters of recommendation from Civic officials and build your resume for future jobs.
- Admission to local sponsored Youth Events including Western States Youth to Youth Summit..

But most of all...You will make a difference in your community!!!

How to Apply

- You must live in Pomona and attend a High School in Pomona or outside Pomona,
- While any High School or Middle School youth may attend meetings or volunteer, only H.S. youth who are Pomona residents can be officially appointed and you must be able to meet, after school, once per week on Mondays for 2 hours throughout the year. Meeting place is at the Pomona Public Library.

Please pick up, complete and return the application to City Hall Council Office by **Thursday, November 1, 2007**. Applications are reviewed by a committee who will select youth for interviews. Mayor and Council members make final appointments. For information

L.A. Youth Council Gives Teens a Taste of Politics

By Cynthia H. Cho

April 11, 2006 *in print edition B-2*

Riding the bus from his West Adams home, 19-year-old Rashad Rucker arrived half an hour early for his Saturday morning meeting at Los Angeles City Hall. Security hadn't even opened the doors.

He has already learned one of the most important skills necessary to be a successful politician: punctuality.

But he has a lot more to learn before he's ready for office, said Rucker, a member of the city's Youth Council. Rucker and many of his colleagues on the panel aspire to public office – and they believe the youth organization is their training ground.

They have good reason to think so. L.A. City Council members **Wendy Greuel** and **Tom LaBonge** served on youth councils. So did state Assemblymen Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) and Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles). They all said their experience on the panels influenced their career paths.

Rucker, a freshman at Santa Monica College who has served nine months on the youth panel, said he was looking forward to a life in politics and hoped his time on the board would be beneficial.

"I want to go as high as maybe the City Council or the Assembly," said Rucker, who plans to transfer to UCLA and major in psychology and political science.

The Youth Council's roots go back to 1974, when then-Mayor Tom Bradley created the Youth Advisory Council. Its goal was to teach young people how the city works.

When he left office in 1993, the Youth Advisory Council was put on hiatus as city officials developed new ways to work with young people, said Olivia Mitchell, a member of Bradley's staff who oversaw the youth panel.

In 1995, the Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families formed and under it, in 1996, the Youth Council as it now exists took shape.

The group – which has more than two dozen members from the San Fernando Valley, the Westside, South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles – learns about city issues, meets with elected officials and makes policy recommendations to the City Council.

The panelists, who must live in L.A. and be between 14 and 19, are either recommended for service by a City Council member or can simply ask to join. The group meets monthly.

Youth Council President Katrina Landeta, 17, a senior at Cleveland High School in Reseda, said that in the year and a half she has been on the panel, she has learned a lot about the city's diverse communities.

"We discussed issues from our high schools, and the stuff other people had to deal with [that] I never had to deal with," she said. "I couldn't believe that other students, just miles from me, have a completely different reality."

Greuel, who grew up in the Valley and served on the youth panel in the late 1970s, also said her time on the board gave her a window into other parts of the city.

For many of the students, the Youth Council is a place to polish some of the social skills necessary for a successful politician.

At the panel's March 18 meeting, as he waited for the session to begin, a smiling Rucker walked around the room greeting his colleagues.

"Good to meet you," he said to one. "We've met before, right?" he said to another.

Katrina, who dreams of running for City Council or mayor someday, said she was learning how to run a meeting and negotiate with peers. During one of the panel's meetings, members discussed what kinds of booths they should set up at the Traffic Safety-Child Health & Safety Fair. Katrina suggested a pie-eating contest.

"Any ideas? Anyone?" she asked.

"What about a fruit-eating contest?" responded Julie Prado, 16, a junior at Cleveland. After all, she pointed out, it's an event to promote health.

In the end, the group agreed on bean-bag-toss and face-painting booths.

Other issues that frequently come up at the youth meetings aren't too different from what L.A. City Council members often discuss: transportation, education and public safety.

In November, the City Council asked the Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families to create a task force – of young people, city officials and private industry – that would develop a Youth Master Plan for the city.

The plan would outline policies on issues affecting young people, such as employment, education and college preparation; safety and violence prevention; and civic engagement.

This spring, the Youth Council will facilitate a series of forums in different areas of the city where young people can meet to talk about issues that affect their lives and communities. The information will be used by the task force to help create the master plan.

Councilman LaBonge said there are things he thinks the City Council could learn from the youth panel, particularly common courtesy.

Not all Youth Council members become politicians.

Mitchell, who oversaw the Youth Advisory Council from 1974 until 1993, said several of her charges became lawyers.

Craig Renetzky is one of them. He is now a deputy district attorney for Los Angeles County and said his involvement in the youth panel in the early 1980s was important for him.

"It opens your eyes to politics in a new way," he said. "You're almost an insider seeing things. You're in City Hall. You see city government work."

The skills learned as members of a youth council will serve young people well in whatever endeavor they pursue, said Noemi Madrigal, a member of the group in the early 1990s who now works with juveniles for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

"It made me much more of an assertive person," Madrigal said. "I wasn't afraid to talk to people and was able to stand up for the things I believed in."