

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
April 6, 2004
Timed: 3:30 p.m.

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Sacramento County Youth Commission
Subject: Report of the Sacramento County Youth Commission
Contact: Kim Dahl (874-4667)

Background:

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors authorized the formation of the Youth Commission on March 31, 1998. The Sacramento County Youth Commission consists of fifteen youths appointed by the County Board of Supervisors to be a voice for all youth in local government. Commissioners serve two-year terms and must attend a Sacramento County middle or high school to be eligible. The Commission meets monthly on the second Monday at 6:15 pm. Commissioners also represent the Commission at important community events, forums and committees.

The Commission comes before your Board to report on activities performed by the Commission since our last report.

Recommendations:

1. Receive and file
2. That the Board aggressively recruit and interview to fill the vacancies on the Commission. Applications are available on our web site and are distributed to the public at our events.

Fiscal Impact:

Recommendations do not have a fiscal impact.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Youth Commission is to collectively identify issues facing Sacramento youth, effectively voice the concerns of youth in Sacramento County, plan events that help youth in a positive way, and bring ideas to your Board for improving and solving problems facing today's youth. Our goal is to connect Sacramento youth with the Board of Supervisors to collaborate efforts to build a better community for Sacramento's youth.

Accomplishments:

The Youth Commission has accomplished many wonderful tasks this year. They are divided into two main categories: community outreach, and promoting the SCYC.

Community Outreach:

- Representing the Commission at the 2003 Power Summit in San Francisco.
- Representing the Commission at the Steinberg Summer Youth Program.
- Representing the Commission at the Arden Arcade Community Building Day.
- Participating in a program entitled Remember Me.
- Participating in Project Help.

Power Summit

On Saturday, May 13, 2003, Youth Commissioner LaCandice McCray attended the Power Summit 2003 in Oakland, California. The Oakland Youth Advisory Commission and the San Francisco Youth Commission hosted the summit. The purpose of the summit was to gather Northern California Youth Commissions together and share ideas on how to create change in our legislature. There were several workshops held at the summit. These included: "How to Lobby When You're Not a Lobbyist," "The Power of Youth," and "Building a Movement." Lunch was provided along with dinner and a DJ. The power summit was a great way for our commission to learn how to advocate and participate in local government. The host commissioners, in order to keep Northern California Youth Commissioners communicating, have created a Yahoo Groups email list. LaCandice frequently brings information to our meetings regarding statewide collaboration and networking.

Steinberg Summer Youth Program

In May of 2003, Sierra Summers and Beth Griffiths attended a Summer Youth Fair hosted by Assembly member Darrell Steinberg. Organizers of summer programs from all over Sacramento County attended to distribute information on their programs. Sierra and Beth handed out Sacramento County Youth Commission (SCYC) brochures and explained the purpose and actions of the Commission to visitors. A sign-up sheet to receive more information on the Commission was provided, as were Sierra and Beth's business cards. Hopefully this event helped to promote community awareness of SCYC.

Remember Me Project

In February 2003, the YSPN organized a group of youths from various youth organizations to attend a youth in government conference, sponsored by the Center for Civic Participation. The youths represented the City and County Youth Commissions, Freedom Bound Center, Oak Park Multi Services Center, Great Start, and ACT. Sierra

Summers represented us at this conference. As part of the conference, the youths developed a plan to create a series of policy youth forums called Remember Me. The forums would be on topics of interest to youths, with youths and community leaders talking about issues during dinner. The topics the youths selected were: youth engagement, youth employment, and drug and alcohol prevention.

Youth Commissioners Cindy Pham and LaCandice McCray have represented the Youth Commission at the planning meetings for the first dinner. Meetings were held bi-monthly from 4:30-6:30 p.m. 40 –50 youth and adults attended the dinner on October 13 at the Sierra Health Foundation. The youth made a short presentation on the topics and then an informal but structured conversation took place at each dinner table. At the end of the dinner, everyone received a “commitment card” to state how they are willing to support youths in addressing issues of concern to them. The purpose of Project Remember Me was to open dialogue between youths and adults, create connections between the two groups, and promote some policy dialogue. All involved felt that the dinner was a success since the youth spoke up freely and the adults by and large were respectful and listened.

Arden Arcade

In May 2003, Youth Commissioners Sierra Summers, Beth Griffin, Amanda Koire, and LaCandice McCray attended the Arden Arcade Community Day Celebration. This day was dedicated to enrich and bring together the Arden-Arcade community. Various community services and organizations were present. There was also food and entertainment provided by the local rotary club. The youth commissioners ran their own booth and distributed flyers and other forms of information to the community about the County Youth Commission. It was a very lively, community building, and culture-enriching day.

Promoting the SCYC:

- Designing polo shirts for the Youth Commissioners.
- Participating in an interview on 100.5 the Zone and 103.5 the Bomb promoting the Youth Commission.
- SCYC website and email account up and running.
- Creating business cards to distribute at community events.
- Redesigning the Youth Commission application form.
- Meeting with their respective Board members to give the Board updates on Commission issues.

SCYC Website

The Sacramento County Youth Commission has been planning and designing a website which is now up and running. The web address is <http://www.saccounty.net/commissions/youth-commission/index.html>. The public can E-mail commissioners from the web site and three youth commissioners respond to these emails. This duty will be rotated amongst the commissioners. Statements about why we chose to serve on the Youth Commission can be found here as well as our past reports to your Board.

Brochure:

This year the SCYC designed, printed, and distributed at least 20,000 brochures entitled "Activities for Youth." The brochures listed many summer and after school activities in attempt to keep youth active, therefore away from drugs and alcohol. Some of the activities listed on the brochures ranged from educational opportunities and clubs like ATS (Academic Talent Search) to sports like the Youth Golf Association and the CSUS Aquatic Center. School activities like Science Olympiad, Mock Trial, Peer Court, and Academic Decathlon were listed.

The SCYC has decided to print these brochures again next spring since they mostly address summer activities. Several agencies have repeatedly requested additional copies of these brochures as they are of interest to the youth they serve. The information included in this brochure is available on our web site.

Application Form

The SCYC application form has been updated. The application now includes questions that are geared for more personal responses and more pertinent to issues that impact youth. The revised application is available on the SCYC's web site.

Work in Progress:

- **Focus Groups**

This year the SCYC considered implementing focus groups to gain more information about youth. Sierra Summers, Chairperson of the Commission, came up with the idea and the Commission held the first focus group meeting on November 14, 2003. The Commission was hoping for fifteen to thirty teens to discuss issues important to them and their community, while in an informal and relaxed environment. The Commission was somewhat disappointed that only four youth attended the first dinner on November 14 at Steve's Pizza – Five Points. Despite the small attendance, many ideas were shared as to how to reach more youth, such as extending invitations to start attending regularly scheduled SCYC meetings, as well as taking that opportunity to address the Commission.

The issues raised by those attending supporting the findings of the survey done two years ago. Those present were glad to talk about issues and the one mentioned most was that adults do not understand us and we don't understand them. This creates communication

problems. The lack of services to allow pregnant teens to keep up in school and with their friends was also mentioned.

Issues raised by those attending supported the findings of the survey completed approximately two years ago. Those in attendance were anxious to talk about issues that were important to them; the one issue mentioned most frequently was that adults do not understand them. This creates significant communication problems. Additionally, the lack of services available for pregnant teens to allow them to keep up in school and with their friends was also mentioned.

SCYC is already planning the second focus group and plans on moving these sessions around to different neighborhoods in other districts. Dinner or refreshments will be provided to the youth at these events.

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- **GABY Grant**

The Youth Commission has applied for a GABY Grant to pay for several Focus Group dinners. SCYC applied for the grant due to budget cuts, as well as to gain experience. The Commission will find out if they got the grant in the spring of 2004.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Sacramento County Youth Commission has accomplished many great things this year. We attended many conferences, including the Power Summit in San Francisco, participated in many community programs, and even instigated an entirely new and unique outreach program, the Focus Group. The Commission continues to strive to be an outlet that youth can use to let their voices be heard.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Dahl, Staff
Youth Commission

CONCUR:

PENELOPE CLARKE, Administrator
Countywide Services Agency

CONCUR:

TERRY SCHUTTN
County Executive