

Youth Advisory Council Agenda March 28, 2024

Chair Emma Cedeno-Alonso

City Manager Mike DaRoza

Vice Chair Abigail Blumer

Member Robert Hu

Member Selina Liu

Member Keyosha Queen

Youth Advisory Council At 6:00 PM

Meeting Date: March 28, 2024

Meeting Location: James A. Lewis City Commission Chambers

15100 NW 142 Ter.

Notice given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes. In order to appeal any decision made at this meeting, you will need a verbatim record of the proceedings. It will be your responsibility to ensure such a record is made.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

I. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Restoring Dignity - Wellness Packet Project

II. NEW BUSINESS

- B. January 25, 2024, Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

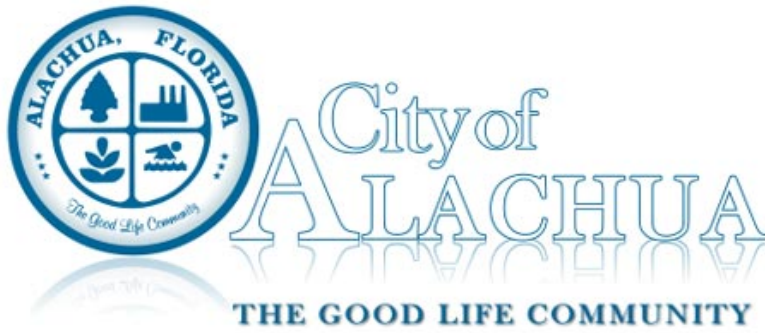
C. 2024 Youth Council Community Service Contest

D. Combining Youth Advisory Council and Education Task Force efforts

III. BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

ADJOURN



Board/Committee Agenda Item

MEETING DATE: 3/28/2024

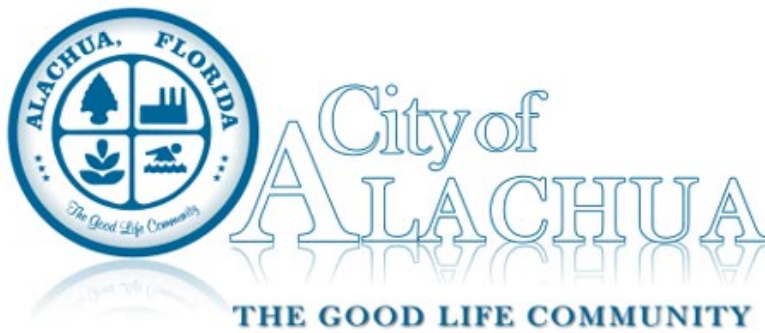
SUBJECT: Restoring Dignity - Wellness Packet Project

PREPARED BY: LeAnne Williams, Deputy City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Final thoughts.

Summary

Thank you for the hard work everyone has put into the project.



Board/Committee Agenda Item

MEETING DATE: 3/28/2024

SUBJECT: January 25, 2024, Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

PREPARED BY: LeAnne Williams, Deputy City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the minutes.

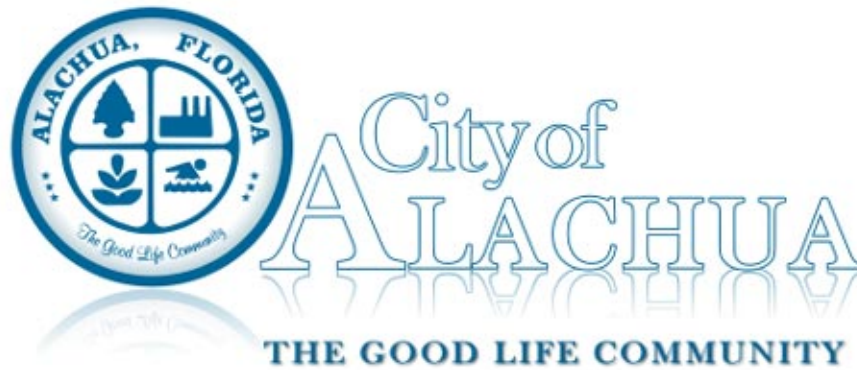
Summary

January 25, 2024, Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

☐ Minutes



Youth Advisory Council Minutes January 25, 2024

Chair Emma Cedeno-Alonso

City Manager Mike DaRoza

Vice Chair Abigail Blumer

Member Robert Hu

Member Selina Liu

Member Keyosha Queen

Youth Advisory Council At 6:00 PM

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YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

Abigail Blumer – Vice Chair

INVOCATION

LeAnne Williams, Deputy City Clerk

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Abigail Blumer, Vice Chair

Emma Cedeno-Alonso, Chair - Absent

Jolene Brown, General Council Member - Absent

Joshua Smoak, General Council Member - Absent

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Member Robert Hu moved to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by Member Selina Liu.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Restoring Dignity - Wellness Packet Project
Presentation provided. LeAnne Williams, Deputy City Clerk

II. NEW BUSINESS

- B. November 30, 2023, Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Member Hu moved to approve the November 30, 2023 minutes; seconded by Member Liu.

Passed by unanimous consent.

- C. December 14, 2023, Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Member Hu moved to approve the December 14, 2023 minutes; seconded by Member Liu.

Passed by unanimous consent.

III. BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

ADJOURN

Member Liu moved to adjourn; seconded by Member Hu.

Passed by unanimous consent.

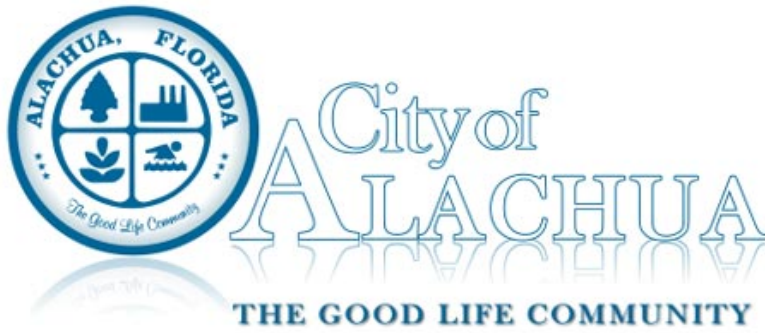
Time of adjournment: 6:59 p.m.

ATTEST:

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA

Presiding Officer

Staff Liaison



Board/Committee Agenda Item

MEETING DATE: 3/28/2024

SUBJECT: 2024 Youth Council Community Service Contest

PREPARED BY: LeAnne Williams, Deputy City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Review the essays and compile them into one essay.

Summary

The Florida League of Cities has sent out the guidelines for the 2024 Youth Council Service Contest. Attached is the brochure for your review. A request was made for every member to submit an essay. We received four.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▢ 2024 Youth Council Community Service Contest Application
- ▢ Essay - Emma
- ▢ Essay - Jolene
- ▢ Essay - Robert
- ▢ Essay - Selina



2024 YOUTH COUNCIL COMMUNITY SERVICE CONTEST

Our future leaders are taking action in their hometowns to address local needs. The Florida League of Cities (FLC) wants to help showcase these efforts through its annual community service contest.

DEADLINE:
April 1, 2024

#FLCITYYOUTH

OVERVIEW

We invite youth councils to submit current projects addressing a local need. Maybe it's volunteering at a community event, educating your fellow youth or organizing a neighborhood or beach cleanup.

The deadline to submit projects is April 1, 2024.

APPLICATION RULES

The application packet must include:

- ① A written description in **500 words or less** that includes:
 - ▶ What the project entailed
 - ▶ What your objectives were and how they were accomplished
 - ▶ What needs the project served in your community
 - ▶ How the project helped the residents you served
 - ▶ How the project impacted your youth council.
- ② A letter of recommendation from the Mayor, Manager/Clerk or a member of the Council/Commission.
- ③ Up to five photos depicting the event.

Your nomination will NOT be scored if missing any of the above.

The FLC Community Service Contest is open only to youth councils sponsored by a city, town or village government that is a member of the FLC.

The deadline for entries is April 1, 2024.

Judging will be based entirely on the youth council's submitted entry. The judges' decision is final, and all material received becomes the property of the FLC, with permission to use it perpetually and universally, in any manner deemed appropriate by the League, with no additional compensation beyond the award money presented to the winner.

SUBMISSION

All work must be submitted through an online form available at flcities.com/municipal-youth-councils.

Submissions that are emailed or mailed will not be judged.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

Winners will be announced in May 2024. Three projects will be selected as winners. Winners will:

- ▶ Be showcased on the League's website and social media platforms
- ▶ Be recognized in press announcements and by Quality Cities magazine
- ▶ Receive a monetary award of \$250 and a trophy/plaque.

The League reserves the right not to award all prizes in any of the categories.

For more information, contact Eryn Russell at erussell@flcities.com.



The 2023-2024 Alachua YAC had its greatest and most difficult undertaking in recent years. Our project, "Restoring Dignity," aimed to provide students of Santa Fe High School and surrounding middle and elementary schools, with sanitary products and essentials to children in need. Some products that were included in our packs; toothbrushes, deodorant, underwear, socks, and many more essentials that shouldn't be difficult for children in our public schools to get ahold of. The idea sprung from what we all saw going on in our schools. The lack of basic necessities for all. As a place of education, schools should be safe and sanitary environments, a location purely to learn and connect with friends. No child should have to worry about basic essentials while attending school. The YAC had plans to include feminine pads and tampons in our sanitary packs, but had to roll back the idea due to certain restrictions. Though unfortunately we did not get to include everything we had in mind, our impact was absolute. We set up boxes at local businesses and places of worship with a brief description of what our project entailed, and to our surprise donations began pouring in almost immediately. This response truly opened our eyes to the amount of love in our community. The corporate donations we received from Dollar general were also a huge contribution and definitely helped us surpass our goal. This project helped facilitate awareness of the need in our community, and provide children and their families with a respite concerning hygienic essentials they may not have otherwise received. The 'Restoring Dignity' project provided our Youth Council the ability to voice our ideas and put them into action. We all feel a sense of pride and accomplishment knowing we helped make a difference in our community. The project also reminded us that although we did what we could for our community, there is so much more that can be done in the future. We must all work towards growth. Community made, community claimed, and community changed is a mantra that should always ring true.

Our most recent project, titled "Restoring Dignity," was a big deal for our Youth Advisory Council. We put together and handed out over 600 bags of sanitary supplies to help those in our community, including deodorant, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, and underwear. While it was tough work, we were all determined to make it happen.

Although we planned to help as many people as we could, our main goal was to help the students of Santa Fe High School. We wanted to support students of all ages and backgrounds through the generous donations of those throughout Alachua. We also made sure to set aside some bags for kids at Alachua Elementary, Irby Elementary, and O2B Kids, so we could help out beyond just high schools.

We hope that our project will make a difference for those in need. For the high school students, we plan for the given supplies to make their lives a bit easier and show them that we care about their education. And for the younger students, we hope to present Alachua as a nurturing town where their needs are provided and their futures are not only possible, but supported.

Further, this project taught us a lot in our Youth Advisory Council, and gave many of us new experiences. We learned how to work together as a team, through decorating the boxes and coming together for meetings, and independently, by choosing spaces to place our donation boxes and keeping responsibility over those places. We also learned about leadership and how important it is for a community, particularly our own, to have a strong sense of place.

In the end, our project showed us that when we come together and work hard, we can truly make a difference. We're proud of what we accomplished, and it's made us even more committed to helping out in our community whenever we can, and accomplishing more in the future.

Restoring Dignity Essay

Many of us on the youth council had just joined the council in November of last year, not knowing what it would offer us. However, after doing the Restoring Dignity Project, we saw the impact we had on the students in school who could not afford the hygiene products most of us take for granted. This fueled our continued desire to work on the Youth Advisory Council and make our city better for all of its residents.

One of our members, Keyosha, discovered a devastating problem in our main high school in Alachua, FL. After talking to the school nurse, she found out that many students were not able to afford the basic necessities that are needed to keep them working hard in school. As a result, we came up with the idea of providing care packages with soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, and socks. According to the nurse, these items are the most needed. The project that we chose seemed impossible. We had a high goal of 500 packages, and we didn't know how we would get there. However, with perseverance and teamwork, we came up with a plan, which was to call local businesses to donate or place boxes at their businesses for the local community to donate. A few weeks later, we had over a dozen Christmas-wrapped boxes all around town. Asking businesses to accept the boxes was not an easy task. Many businesses did not want donation boxes, but by talking to more businesses after rejections, we finally completed the task.

The boxes were not a huge success, so we had to come up with another way to reach our goal. If I learned something, it was that talking to people in person is a much more effective way. When going on a tour of the local Dollar General distribution site, we seized upon the opportunity to ask for their donation. Luckily, they gave us hundreds of each item, allowing us to reach our goal with our other donations. It was certainly a lot of work to then transport hundreds of pounds of items to our city hall and sort them out, but it gave us hope to continue these projects. We learned that there are certainly great opportunities if you go out and look for them. After we worked together as a youth council to package the items in specially designed bags, we sent them off to the school nurse in Santa Fe. We created so many care packages that we gave our remaining ones to local elementary and middle schools because they needed them too.

According to our coordinator, this was the most intense project the YAC has done. It not only impacted the community tremendously, but it also taught us greatly. We learned how to coordinate a charity project to help others, from calling

donors to logistics, packaging, and delivery to schools. We learned how to communicate effectively with both donors and businesses and problem-solve when we encountered difficulties. We will cherish this tiresome yet fulfilling project forever. Most importantly, we know that students will now go home with hygiene products that will benefit them through school and beyond.

2024 Youth Council Community Service Contest Essay

This year, the City of Alachua Youth Advisory Council's project is called "Restoring Dignity," entailing unification of the community by gathering together organizations with the primary aim of addressing the pressing needs of underserved youths in our community. Through collaborative efforts with local businesses and churches, we gathered essential sanitary products such as socks, underwear, deodorants, toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

Our objectives were clear: to provide basic necessities to youths in our community who lacked access to them. We accomplished this by organizing donation drives, fostering partnerships, and mobilizing resources effectively. The project's success lay in our ability to engage stakeholders and channel their support towards a common cause.

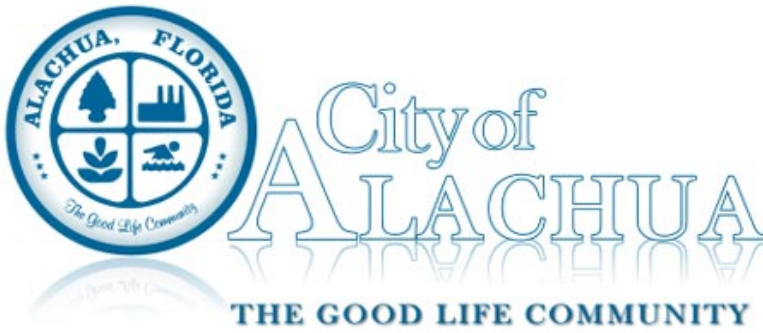
The needs this project served in our community were profound. We identified a gap in access to essential hygiene products, especially among vulnerable youth populations. By addressing this gap, we aimed to alleviate some of the challenges they faced in their daily lives.

The impact of our project was tangible and meaningful. Through our efforts, we were able to provide vital resources to those who needed them most. From the feedback we received, we learned that our contributions brought comfort and relief to many youths. Knowing that we made a difference in their lives reinforced our commitment to community service and inspired us to continue our efforts.

Moreover, the project had a great effect on our Youth Advisory Council. It strengthened our sense of purpose and unity as a group. Collaborating on a project of this scale allowed us to see the power of collective action and the importance of youth involvement in community initiatives. It instilled in us a deeper understanding of our role as agents of change and ambassadors of goodwill.

Moving forward, we recognize the significance of our involvement in community service. It has not only enriched our lives but also prepared us for future endeavors. As members of the Youth Advisory Council, we are committed to serving our community with dedication and compassion, knowing that our actions can make a difference in the lives of others.

In essence, our project "Restoring Dignity" exemplifies the transformative potential of youth-led initiatives. By coming together and taking action, we can address pressing issues, uplift our community, and create a brighter future for all.



Board/Committee Agenda Item

MEETING DATE: 3/28/2024

SUBJECT: Combining Youth Advisory Council and Education Task Force efforts

PREPARED BY: Diane L. Amendola, Assistant Deputy City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive the presentation.

Summary

We would like to extend an invitation to the members of the Youth Advisory Council to attend the next Education Task Force meeting. The next Education Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, April 29, 2024, at 5:00pm.

By merging the efforts of the Youth Advisory Council and the Education Task Force, we can create a powerful synergy that will benefit our community. The unique perspectives and experiences of the youth, combined with the expertise of the Education Task Force, can lead to innovative solutions and programs that will positively impact education and the youth in our community to make a difference.
