



Youth Leadership in America's Communities

Report from the National Youth Summit

July 22-24, 2004
Cleveland, Ohio



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Family and Youth Services Bureau





July 2004

This year, the Youth Council played an important role in planning and facilitating the 2004 National Youth Summit. The Council was comprised of 16 members from all over the Nation. Members of the Council were selected because of their leadership in their communities. They were involved in organizations that ranged from faith-based, foster care, and abstinence promotion to voter registration, learn and serve, and various other community activities. Council meetings were held on a bimonthly basis, beginning February 2004, via teleconferencing and a pre-Summit 3-day planning meeting was held in Cleveland in March.

The Council was instrumental in deciding what types of workshops to offer, selecting the activities to have at the Summit, choosing adult and youth speakers, and helping to facilitate some of the activities at the conference. This year, Council members had even more new and exciting ideas on ways to improve the Summit from previous years. One of the most unique additions was the creation of the "You Write the Book" project, which gave conference participants the chance to have their organizations or projects highlighted in a Youth Leadership Guide that will be published early in 2005.

This year exceeded any of my expectations. The workshops were more geared toward students, the speakers were interesting, projects were thought provoking, and most important, the entire event was FUN! I think the Summit successfully highlighted "Youth Leadership in America's Communities," not only demonstrating what youth from all over the Nation are doing, through workshops and presentations, but also showing the power youth have to plan a national conference such as this one.

I think it is essential to bring together such amazing young individuals for a number of reasons. It allows all of us to find out what other young people are doing all around the country. Through this sharing of knowledge, we will be able to network with each other in the future. Most important, however, I think it's necessary to give everyone a new source of energy and hope. One thing that I noticed at the conference was the fact that the enthusiasm for youth leadership shown by both youth and adults was extremely contagious. Hopefully, that enthusiasm was taken home and is being used in everyone's communities to empower youth as leaders.

Sincerely,

Matt Lerner
Chair, Youth Council
2004 National Youth Summit



PREFACE

“I encourage you to make the right choices, to help others, and to follow your dreams.”

President George W. Bush

It is often said that youth are the leaders of tomorrow. But they’re really the leaders of today!

Young people are taking active roles in nonprofit organizations, on boards of directors, and on community planning committees. They are mapping and cataloging local youth-friendly services. They are producing TV newscasts and serving on jury trials of their peers. And they are starting nonprofit organizations to bring resources to their issues. Youth are shaping their futures and the futures of their communities – NOW!



To showcase their determination, skills, and talents, the 2004 National Youth Summit brought hundreds of youth leaders from

across the country to Cleveland for 3 days of idea sharing, inspiration, and fun. Sponsored by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the event focused on “Youth Leadership in America’s Communities.” And true to that title, youth were involved in the event from start to finish.

As Dr. Wade F. Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said in his address: “Adults could learn a lot from young people, if only we would listen.”

FYSB, a bureau within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families of the Administration for Children and Families, provides national leadership on youth issues and assists individuals, organizations, and communities in providing effective, comprehensive services for youth in at-risk situations and their families. FYSB embodies the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, which celebrates the strengths of America’s youth rather than focusing on their problems. Through active youth

participation and leadership, PYD helps young people thrive in their families, classrooms, afterschool programs, community organizations, sports and arts facilities, and faith institutions.

“I learned that many people take things in the community for granted; they tend to overlook real important issues. And we, the youth, should step in and take charge.”

FYSB embraces youth initiative by including young people in many of its activities. Youth sit on Federal grant review panels for four FYSB programs that have awarded about \$142.3 million to youth-serving institutions. Under a partnership between FYSB and the Head Start Bureau, youth have served as mentors to young children in 169 Head Start programs nationwide. And a Youth Council, with members from around the country, has provided key leadership at the National Youth Summits in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

For the first National Youth Summit in 2002, FYSB collaborated with a variety of government

agencies, youth workers, researchers, program managers, and youth to increase the exposure of PYD nationally. PYD concepts were endorsed by the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, a group charged with developing a new, comprehensive framework for Federal youth policy.

The 2003 Summit, with the theme “Building on the Strengths of America’s Youth,” extended the message of PYD by celebrating

the success and healthy choices made daily by the vast majority of America’s youth.

At the end of the 2003 Summit, many youth participants asked that the next Summit focus on leadership. Young people wanted information about programs that encourage youth to become meaningfully involved in community and government decisionmaking. They wanted to learn more about organizational structure and funding possibilities. And equally

important, youth wanted to share their own leadership experiences.

FYSB responded with the 2004 National Youth Summit: “Youth Leadership in America’s Communities.” A Youth Council of 16 young people played a key role in its planning and implementation.

“I had a passion to help and lead my community before I came here, but now I have even more opportunities that have been opened to me.”



SUMMIT 2004: YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES



In July, nearly 600 attendees from 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico came to this city on the southern tip of

Lake Erie to listen, share, and learn. Fifty-four percent of attendees were youth between 14 and 21 years old. The rest came from community- and faith-based organizations, research and educational institutions, government agencies, and youth service organizations. All shared a common commitment to PYD.

This year’s Summit included 22 workshops that highlighted youth leadership initiatives. In preparing the agenda, Federal staff and community- and faith-based organizations suggested topics and programs that would meet the needs of the Summit’s three main audiences:

1. Young people ready to make a difference in their communities, who wanted to learn ways to begin
2. Young people already working in their communities, who were ready to take the next step
3. Adults committed to supporting young people with their skills and expectations

In the general sessions, five accomplished young leaders gave inspiring addresses, along with speeches by Assistant Secretary for Children and Families Wade F. Horn and Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services Claude A. Allen. Both pledged to

use their offices to continue to support youth-led programs. Networking activities, a panel discussion on community change, and a working session on leadership models rounded out the conference events.

Partnership With Freedom's Answer

The 2004 National Youth Summit saw a unique collaboration between FYSB and Freedom's Answer, a nonpartisan, nonprofit student organization that promotes voter registration and turnout. By scheduling their annual events in tandem, the two organizations gave Summit participants an opportunity to explore one model of youth leadership through Freedom's Answer, while members of Freedom's Answer were encouraged to participate in the Summit's skill-building and networking opportunities.

Mile-Long Youth Art Project

Summit activities kicked off early Thursday morning, with splashes



of color, blasts of music, and laughter. Armed with white paper, colored pens, cardboard cut-outs, and photocopies of famous faces, youth took off their shoes, sprawled across the floor, and collaborated on murals interpreting the theme "Face to Face," which was described as "boldly facing life's challenges." In their work, the youth were asked to use guitar images inspired by Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. By midday, the canvases were vibrant with color and design.



Throughout the 3-day Summit, the art panels were displayed prominently in hallways and in the main ballroom, where youth and adults repeatedly came to admire them. Many paused and commented on the works as they moved around the Summit's "art

gallery." Others snapped photos of themselves in front of the amazing panels to take home as Summit souvenirs.

The art project was just one of the fun activities planned for the 3-day event:

- The Singing Angels, a renowned Cleveland-based youth chorus, entertained general session crowds with a rendition of "Walking on Sunshine," as well as the national anthem and a medley of patriotic songs.
- A National Youth Summit "Triplex" featured films on three screens along with movie-house treats.
- A networking dinner gave participants the opportunity to get to know one another. NYS business cards were provided to all youth, courtesy of the Youth Council, to be filled out and exchanged.



Name: _____
 From: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____



- Summit participants cheered in the stands at a baseball nail-biter between the Cleveland Indians and the Kansas City Royals on Friday night at nearby

Jacobs Field. An 11th-inning home run by the Indians ended the night with a bang! A generous contribution from CVS/pharmacy helped make the trip to the ballpark possible.



Tanairy Preval, 17, of North Miami, Fla., works on an art project meant to help bring participants together at the National Youth Summit being held in Cleveland.

Kids celebrate harmony at summit

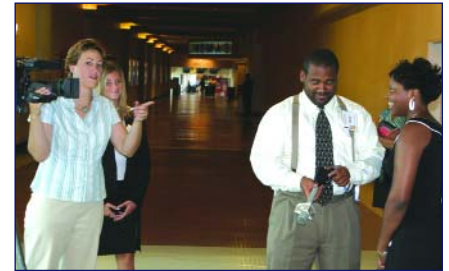
FRANK SEGALL
Yale Daily Reporter

outside Washington, D.C.
Hayes talked about her self-help group for foster youths at home. Fresh talked about his voice register.

equality," said Stephen Lucas, 16, Leeburg, Pa. Participants heard about the art

boarded a plane for the first time so that she could share her experiences working in a self-help group for foster youth.

The Summit was also covered by WCPN radio, WKYC television, the Ohio News Network, and Record Publishing.



NYS in the News

Tanairy Preval, 17, of North Miami, Florida, had her photograph featured in the Plain Dealer, after a reporter from the Cleveland newspaper visited with Summit youth as they worked on the Mile-

Long Art Project. Under the headline "Kids celebrate harmony at summit," the article quoted several young people, including 19-year-old Carmena Hayes, who left her 10-month-old twins at home in Birmingham, Alabama, and

"I have learned that, given the opportunities, the youth can and will take charge. They really want to be heard and be able to make a difference in their communities."



GENERAL SESSIONS



Youth Council Chair Matt Lerner, 18, from Middleton, Maryland, opened the Summit

by discussing what he sees as the biggest challenge of youth today: living and leading in a transforming world.

"We, as youth, have the challenge of leading in ways we never thought possible," he said. The Internet has provided youth the opportunity to take leadership roles in the international community, while the advent of service learning requirements for high school graduation in some States has pushed youth to become more active in their own neighborhoods. "We need many different leaders

these days," he said. "We need to urge young people to take the initiative any way we can."

In his welcoming remarks, Harry Wilson, Associate Commissioner of FYSB, took Matt's challenge one step further. Stressing that youth are in a position to influence those who legislate policies well into the future, he challenged young people to "help shape the



hundreds of ways the government views youth.”

Cleveland’s mayor, Jane Campbell, closed the session by inviting attendees to take advantage of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and all the other attractions the city had to offer.

Hawaiian Greetings

“ALOHA!” Allan Silva called out to those who had gathered for the second morning of the Summit. “Aloha!” the room roared back. After explaining the meaning of the famous Hawaiian word, Silva and youth members of ALU LIKE, a Native Hawaiian empowerment organization, brought the audience to its feet with a sing-along of the local favorite, “Spread a Little Aloha

The Meaning of ALOHA

- A** stands for “*ala*,” which means kindness
- L** stands for “*lokahi*,” which means unity
- O** stands for “*oia’i’o*,” which means agreeable
- H** stands for “*ha’aha’a*,” which means humility
- A** stands for “*ahonui*,” which means patience

Around the World.” The room was filled with youth and adults alike spelling A-L-O-H-A with outstretched arms.

Youth Lead the Way

Lobby government. Raise funds. Organize international online communities. Five of the speakers at the 2004 Summit really showed how to get things done! And, for the youth at the Summit, their stories served as an even greater inspiration. Why? The speakers were all under 25 years old.



Deborah Hsieh

At 14 years old, Deborah (Chi-Chi) Hsieh decided that something needed to be done to improve the prospects of the largely Hispanic, low-income community down the road from her home in Chandler, Arizona. In quick succession, she met with the director of a local community center, secured a grant from the Best Buy Foundation, recruited volunteers, and developed the curriculum for an afterschool program that taught both computer and life skills to preschoolers and high school students alike. Going on to Harvard University, Chi-Chi continued her community activism in the Boston area. Reflecting on her own experiences, Chi-Chi

encouraged the Summit youth to immerse themselves in the community around them and really get to know the people and issues on a personal level. She lauded passion but reminded the youth to also be purposeful, to make commitments and fulfill them.

Jennifer Corriero

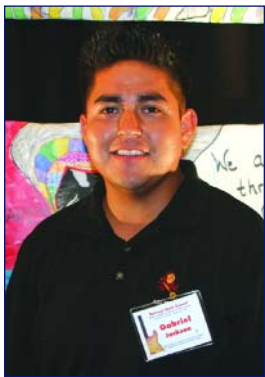
Twenty-four-year-old Jennifer Corriero co-founded TakingIT-Global 5 years ago, in an effort to organize youth initiative around the world. The popular online forum that was created serves as a network for the tens of thousands of youth who want to effect change in their communities and globally. Through her work, Jennifer has learned a number of lessons. She offered the 10 best:

1. Believe in yourself and others. Have confidence that you can make a difference.
2. Gain experience by getting involved.
3. Get creative.
4. Become solution-oriented. When you focus on your goal, instead of your obstacles, it becomes more real.
5. Don’t be afraid to fail.
6. Connect with mentors, and have many.
7. Follow up on opportunities.
8. Build your network. The more you are able to connect with the people around you, the bigger the difference you can make.

- 9. Share your expertise.
- 10. Do what you love and bring love into what you do.

Mark Godfrey

“Carry the canoes” was one of Mark Godfrey’s tickets to successful youth leadership. A dynamic fundraiser for the 4-H Kids Helping Kids Fund, Mark took his leadership cues from the everyday events around him. After a surprisingly difficult canoeing trip left Mark and the other paddlers exhausted, four members of the crew still volunteered to carry the heavy, water-laden canoes back to the truck. Mark told Summit attendees that each of the four paddlers who was willing to go the extra mile to get the job done that day has gone on to achieve greater success. He urged youth to volunteer for the tough jobs and see them through until the end. “The end,” he said, “is the most important part of the race.”



Gabriel Jackson
Gabriel Jackson, a 24-year-old member of the Yavapai-Apache Nation, grew up in

a Native American community that he felt was falling victim to its own stereotypes; youth drug abuse, alcoholism, and unemployment threatened to sabotage the future. Searching for a way to

make a difference, he joined United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) 7 years ago, and set about bringing a chapter of the Native youth empowerment organization to his tribe. The task, he said, wasn’t easy. But through perseverance, he was able to “set his community on fire.” He challenged the Summit youth to “set the world on fire” by first starting a spark of change in each community. “Our world needs to change now,” he said. “So don’t be tomorrow’s leaders. Be today’s leaders.”

Policymaker Perspectives

With several decades of youth development work between them, Claude Allen and Wade Horn are two of the government’s most enthusiastic supporters of youth leadership. Their commitment has helped make events like the National Youth Summit possible.



Claude A. Allen,
Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services

“For every young person who has a dream, you need to have a plan to achieve that dream, and people to support you in that dream,” said Deputy Secretary Allen in his

address. For Allen, who grew up in a lower-income neighborhood in Philadelphia, his tight-knit Jamaican family provided the expectations and support that guided him through to law school and beyond. In his role at HHS, Allen said that he has drawn on that heritage to fund programs that support community-wide Positive Youth Development. “The connection between a child and parents, peers, community, and schools determines how youth will deal with risk factors,” Allen said. He pledged the government’s support in helping youth thrive.



Wade F. Horn, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families

In his address, Dr. Horn invoked the memory of 9/11 hero Todd Beamer to urge the youth present to unleash their own inner “rebels” in service to others. “I’m asking you to be the kind of rebel who is a shining example of what it means to be a leader in your families, with your peers, and in your communities,” he said. “This invitation is based on a very closely held belief of this Administration – that every single one

of you is special, endowed with dignity, for as President Bush has said, ‘Each person has a place and purpose in this world.’”

Dr. Horn reminded the youth that leadership and service don’t necessarily have to come through formal organizations like the Boy Scouts or 4-H. “It can happen as you are walking down the street and see an elderly person who needs assistance. It can be in your school when a victim of bullying needs you to stand between him or her and the bully. It can also happen as you try to serve as a good example for your younger siblings,” he said. “By using your gifts to serve others, rather than being a ‘rebel without a cause,’ you will be a ‘rebel with a cause.’”

**Community Action Panel:
“Fast Food + Screen Time
= Bad News”**

That America has a weight problem is not news. How to respond to the growing crisis, however, is one of this Nation’s most pressing challenges. Using a case study of a hypothetical town – Liberty, USA – youth were urged to think strategically about how to marshal resources to address com-

munity-wide problems, such as youth obesity. A panel of four youth and three adult experts exchanged ideas with moderator Bill Stanczykiewicz of the Indiana Youth Institute. Audience members shared their thoughts and ideas at the end of the session.

Key Recommendations:

- Get kids off the streets. The streets are stressful, so kids eat too much.
- Get the parents involved.
- Make “after school” not seem like school. Make it more fun.
- Kids don’t often learn how to play organized sports. If they were taught how, they’d be more willing to join teams.
- Take abandoned areas and turn them into parks or gardens.
- Don’t just say no. Give kids something to say yes to. Faith-based activities teach kids that they have a purpose. They give them a reason to be healthy.
- Instead of focusing on new programs, find ways to sustain those that exist and work.
- Focus on “the youth,” not on “programs for the youth.”

Healthier youth are the ones who have taken ownership of their lives.

- Instead of pressuring fast food restaurants, kids should be taught culinary skills to open their own restaurants or to cook their own meals.
- Adults have been telling kids that nutrition and exercise aren’t important by prioritizing academics over physical education. Those priorities need to be reconsidered.

Community Action Panel

Stephanie Acosta Inks, Youth Mentor

Andrew Bryant, Student Leader, YO!

B.J. Carter, Director, Child Health Initiative, Strang Institute

Chi-Chi Hsieh, Youth Community Activist

Dr. Richard Lerner, Professor, Tufts University

Orlando Suazo, Youth Ambassador, T.R.U.C.E.

Michael Williams, Director, Orchards Children’s Services



WORKSHOPS

More youth presenters than ever came to this year's Summit to share their own leadership stories with their peers. All 22 workshops featured youth involved in civic organizing, fitness programs, mentoring, juvenile justice, and abstinence programs, among others. To provide the "big picture," researchers also presented information on the latest trends in youth development. In addition, a youth-led group from the South Side of Chicago reported on its efforts, under a FYSB demonstration grant, to implement Positive Youth Development community-wide. Each presenter handed out a toolkit of information that attendees could use to launch similar projects in their own communities.

Examples of the unique and informative workshops included:

- The Resistance: Liberating Youth, Raising the Sexual Standard
- Exploring Youth Community Internships
- How to Promote, Support, and Celebrate Youth Environmental and Social Action
- Can Programs for Out-of-School Youth Change Lives? The Story of YouthBuild
- Religiosity, Spirituality, and Youth: "Hardwired to Connect"



The Resistance: Liberating Youth, Raising the Sexual Standard

"Absolutely a hot subject for the audience, and the presenters did an excellent job conveying that Decisions Determine Destiny."

A high-energy team of four youth and one adult from Operation Keepsake in Ohio enthralled the room with original skits and personal anecdotes about why sexual abstinence was the best choice. The youth explained their belief that abstinence until marriage is the healthiest decision and one that requires commitment, support, and knowledge. They encouraged youth to learn what abstinence means and why it is important.

Toolkit

In the toolkit that accompanied the workshop, the presenters offered step-by-step advice on how to start an abstinence-until-

marriage peer group, how to conduct meetings, and which topics to discuss. They also provided the script for a skit that promotes abstinence as HIV prevention.

Exploring Youth Community Internships

How do homeless teens in Anchorage's Covenant House overcome great odds and little experience to become independent, working adults? Internships! Formerly homeless youth Nick Zapata and Valerie Hawkins impressed the workshop audience by describing how internships helped them initiate their careers. They then led the audience

"Our team learned so much from the experience, right from the first day that we began preparing our workshop down to the flight home to Anchorage. For Nick and Valerie to work on the workshop as part of a team, to present in front of our management team here in Anchorage, to get to travel to downtown Cleveland, to stay in such a great hotel, to meet so many inspirational young people from all over the country, to present a dynamic hands-on workshop to these peers, to interact around the dinner table with policymakers and service providers, etc. The list of opportunities for growth goes on and on."

- Todd Shenk, Youth Development Coordinator, Covenant House Alaska

through a dynamic brainstorming session on the Why, Who, and How of soliciting and keeping internships. They urged those present to think creatively about available opportunities: Why not intern with a rock and roll band?

Toolkit

Besides providing a handy summation of the presentation, the toolkit went over the nine building blocks of structuring an internship, including advice on negotiating time commitments, creating a formal memorandum of agreement, and keeping an internship journal.

How to Promote, Support, and Celebrate Youth Environmental and Social Action

TakingItGlobal, a global online community of youth leaders, is mastering the art and craft of community change. In an interactive presentation, they brainstormed with attendees about concrete ways to make a difference.

Toolkit

TakingItGlobal provided a Guide to Action that walks youth through the process of creating change. (A portion of the Guide, which is available on the Internet, was reproduced in the toolkit.) The Guide first encourages youth to reflect on changes they would like to make, then proceeds workbook style through planning, implementation, and evaluation.

“Everyone in the room had different main points because the workshop was set up in a unique way so everyone in the room could share their ideas. Very awesome. My personal favorite.”

Can Programs for Out-of-School Youth Change Lives? The Story of YouthBuild

YouthBuild turns out successful youth one 2x4 at a time. The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program teaches disadvantaged and unemployed youth ages 16 to 24 how to build housing for low-income and homeless people while they study for GEDs or high school diplomas. Three graduates of YouthBuild from different parts of the country gave compelling presentations about the opportunities that the program opened up for them. The greatest gift, they said, was that the program made them believe in themselves.

Toolkit

In June, YouthBuild released a study, “Life After YouthBuild,” that polled 900 graduates of the program. The toolkit was an executive summary of the report, which found that 92 percent of the graduates came away with a solid self-image and optimism about the future. For instance, youth who thought they would live to be 40 years old (on average) before going through the program, later felt they would make it to the age of 72.

Religiosity, Spirituality, and Youth: “Hardwired to Connect”

From birth, children yearn for strong family attachment, supportive community relationships, and a fundamental understanding of moral and spiritual truth. More and more often, however, youth are missing these crucial building blocks. The findings from a recent, groundbreaking report, “Hardwired to Connect,” by the Commission on Children at Risk, help explain the current high number of U.S. children who suffer from emotional and behavioral problems. Workshop presenter and commission member Bill Stanczykiewicz of the Indiana Youth Institute concluded that families and youth development organizations need to redouble efforts to offer the personal and spiritual connectedness that children increasingly lack. To drive the point home, Curtis Adkins described his experiences as a young man going outside his home to seek a caring, spiritual community that could give him the solid foundation he felt that he was lacking.

Toolkit

“Hardwired to Connect” concluded that youth have the best chance of thriving in “authoritative” communities, where warmth and nurturing are balanced by clear limits and expectations. The 10 components of an authoritative community are described in the toolkit.



Rounding out the workshops were:

Pull Your Weight! Youth Improving Their Communities Through Service Learning

Rapping About Mapping: Learn About YouthMapping to Find Community Resources

Good News About America's Youth: The National 4-H Study

I Live Here Too! Youth Making a Difference in Their Communities Today



A Rising Generation of Youth Leadership: Building Healthy Communities in the 21st Century

Youth Court: Young People Delivering Justice

Creative Ways To Make Money – Get Incorporated!

Internet Wasteland: Youth Action Council Asserting Its Right To Have a Safe Place To Work and Play Online

High School Students Too Young To Vote but Old Enough To Lead!

Building Community Capacity for Positive Youth Development in Bronzeville – A FYSB Positive Youth Development Demonstration Project

Got Healthy Youth? We Do!

Celebrate Fitness: Youth are Promoting Active Living and

Healthy Lifestyles

National Guard ChalleNGe Program – Youth Leaders in Training

Head Start Youth Mentoring Volunteers ... Small Steps Making a Big Difference!

Youth Power! Youth Making Positive Community Connections

What Do Youth Say About Abstinence Education?

Building and Empowering Young Leaders – Youth Share Their Experience of What Works

“I realized that our city lacks leadership opportunities. I would like to take the information I received here and start something with youth that will give them opportunities.”

YOU WRITE THE BOOK

Summit participants were asked to come to the final session on Saturday morning ready to get down to work. Before the Summit ended and everyone returned home, the Youth Council was eager to have attendees, both youth and adults, contribute their wealth of experience to a “Leadership Guide,” a publication that will highlight today’s youth leadership.

How It Worked:

Participants divided into groups of 15-20. Facilitators from the Youth

Council asked members of each group to brainstorm effective youth leadership initiatives in their communities. There was no lack of ideas! After dozens of innovative programs were offered, each group was asked to whittle down the list to a handful of the most compelling examples.

A broad range of programs were recommended and discussed, including:

- Adopt-A-Grandparent, Montello Teenpower, Montello, WI

- YMCA BLACK Achievers, Cleveland, OH
- STAR Leadership Training, Sarasota County, FL
- Community Garden, Latin American Youth Center, Washington, DC
- Teen Vox youth newspaper, Fulton County, NY
- STEP smoking prevention, Lafayette, IN

Using a series of prepared questions, participants discussed the programs in detail, trying to identify what makes each one so successful. Responses included:

- Its ability to change average students into above-average leaders
- Lets everyday heroes know that youth care
- Kids are being listened to
- The opportunity to collaborate with other teens and create an article on different views or beliefs or events in the world today

- High school and elementary school students work together
- It was made by us, the youth, and directed towards us, the youth

Participants also were asked to share the moment they realized that a program was special:

- “When I saw change in myself and recognized problems affecting myself and others in my community, when I noticed that with the help of this program, I could get my voice out there and know it counts.”
- When the program “got the community aware of the health

problems our world is facing. It was unique and simple.”

- “When I saw the youth that I mentored as the leaders of this project.”
- “When I did my first peer project, where I worked directly with students for the first time, someone looked up to me and believed in me, and in return I believed in myself. I started to feel good about myself.”

The “Leadership Guide” will be compiled and published in the next year. It will be made available free on the Web.



CLOSING THOUGHTS



The 2004 Summit was a shining example of Positive Youth Development in practice. Over the 3-day event, youth were guided and inspired by young people, many of whom already had proven to be effective leaders. They also had an opportunity to partner with adults – from playing key roles in planning and

hosting the conference, to addressing general sessions and conducting workshops, to “writing the book” on youth leadership.

The 2005 National Youth Summit, **Youth In Action—Making a Difference**, will focus on youth and public policy, economics, community, and creativity.

Young people have already suggested a wide variety of topics for workshops, speakers, and activities. They have pledged to come to the 2005 National Youth Summit with ideas and enthusiasm, showing that they too are willing to “carry the canoes”!



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Summit Planning Committee

Family and Youth Services Bureau

Jacqueline Baker
Youth Services Program Specialist

Harry Wilson
Associate Commissioner

National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth

Kathy Beatty	Marcia Meth
Lee Britton	Stephanie Olmstead-Dean
Deborah Brouse	Celeste Pleasant
Adrian Burnim	Marcia Radin
Rebecca Chalmers	Jennifer Rich
Marla Katz	

JBS Design Center

Claire Speights

CBM Consulting

Consie Miller

Rosenberg Communications

Jeff Rosenberg
Donna Sneyd

2004 Youth Council

Alayna Cohen
Jenoy Coleman
Bigvai Estrada
Ben Pearson Fletcher
Heather Guidry
Veda Hansbro
Simone Harris
Sam Herbert
Julie Hocker
Brad Keating
Matt Lerner
Nacho Paz
Joe Semsar
Valery Valverde
Tina Williams
Emily Wilson

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Artist and Muralist

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Cleveland, Ohio

Molly Barnard, Program Coordinator
Female Youth Mentoring Program of Merrick House

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Girl Scouts of Lake Erie Council

Patricia M. Kearney, Marketing Supervisor
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Lisa A. Kreiger, Senior Marketing Director
Tower City Center

Jim McManus, Account Executive
Cleveland Indians Baseball Co.

Stephen Wing, Director of Government Programs
CVS/pharmacy

Louis Zsula, Event Manager
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

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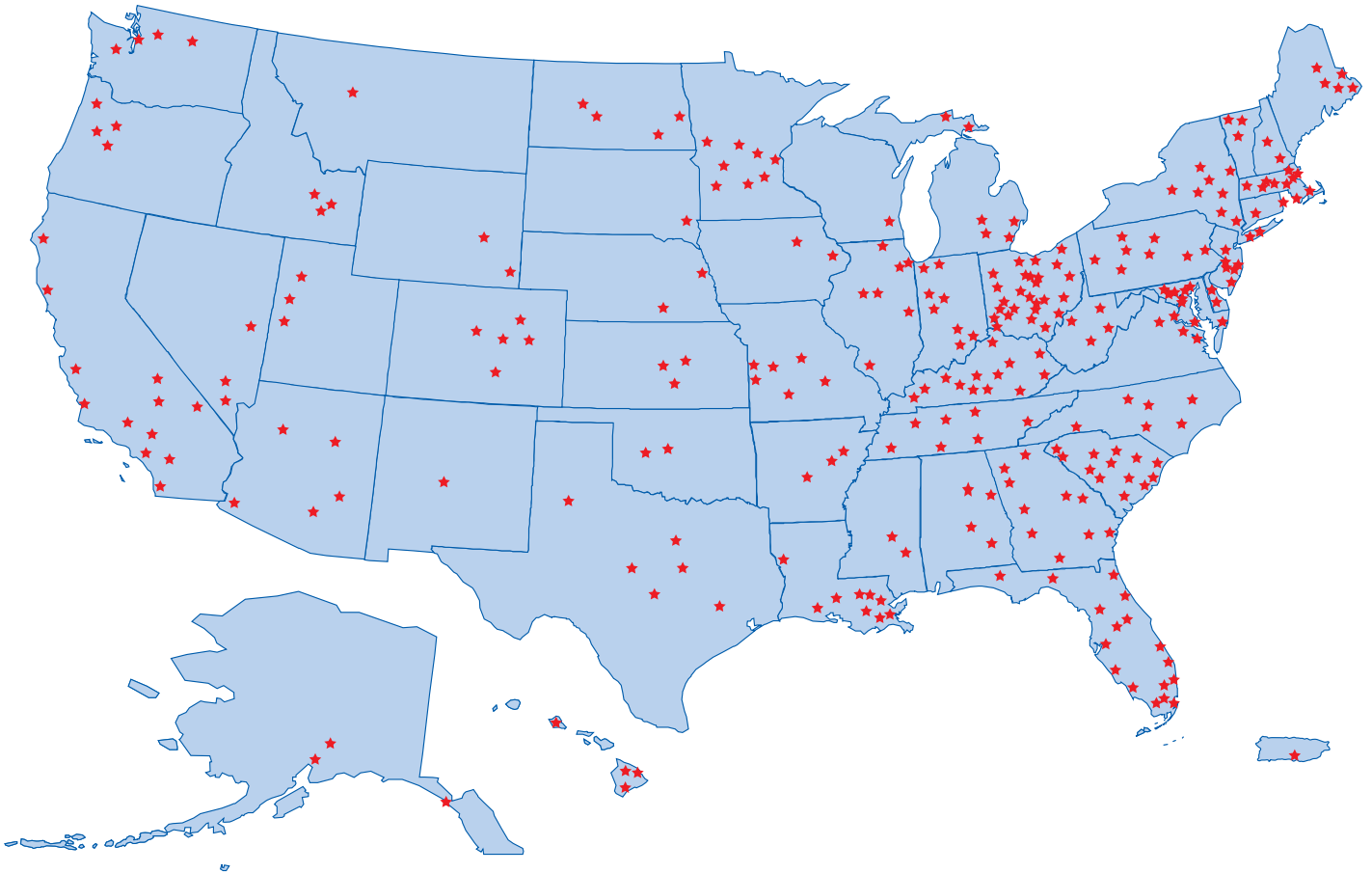
Corporation for National and Community Service

White House Office of Faith-Based
and Community Initiatives



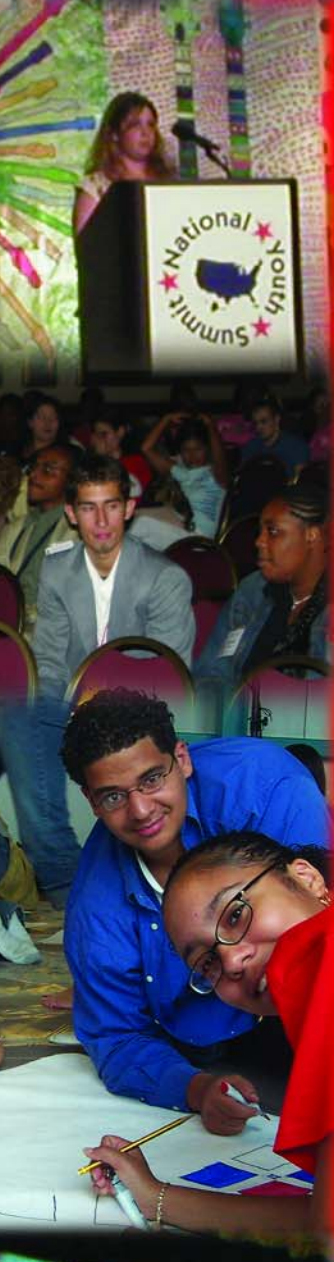
WHERE WE LIVE

(2004 National Youth Summit Attendees)



“The overall {Summit} was terrific and inspiring, with all the young people there, turned on to leadership training, and wearing their red tee shirts proudly. Very youth centered and consistent in all respects with the Positive Youth Development model.”

-Andrew Hahn, professor and founder of the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University



For information on the next National Youth Summit:
www.ncfy.com

