

SUMMARY OF YOUTH TOWN HALLS ON CIVIC LEADERSHIP OCTOBER 24, 2012

DEFINING CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Civic leadership is community-based rather than person-based and involves working with others rather than above them.
- Collaboration among leaders working with several groups of people to solve a problem is required.
- Civic leadership involves reaching out to make things happen on a comprehensive, community level.
- Good civic leadership involves many small actions that have a multiplier effect that creates significant and lasting change.

ROLE OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP IN OUR LIVES

- Civic leaders inspire others to get involved by getting us to expand our knowledge, teaching us different perspectives, and helping us develop and understand our own opinions.
- Civic leadership benefits communities by benefiting individuals and vice versa.
- We are brought together and shaped into who we are through civic leadership.
- Through the example and experience of civic leadership, we learn to take it upon ourselves to make things happen.

FACTORS IMPACTING CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Family, culture, age, economic status, ethnicity and religion all impact the development of civic leaders because they influence how people relate to each other.
- Having a diversity of backgrounds represented in civic affairs enables different viewpoints to be considered and results in higher levels of engagement and stronger civic leaders.
- Civic leaders must seek to understand and incorporate differences in order to develop better solutions.
- By recognizing the perspectives within and amongst groups, we can go beyond differences to find common ground.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Social media may have its downsides but it is also a powerful communication tool than can quickly disseminate useful information.
- We can get lots of ideas from social media and learn what others are doing in their communities and get inspired by that.
- Social media exposes us to opposing opinions and ideas which can stimulate our own thoughts.
- Individuals can voice their opinions without fear of reprisal using social media, thereby engaging more people and presenting a greater diversity of viewpoints.

RESPECT AND COLLABORATION ARE KEY TO CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Collaboration and respect are essential for true civic leadership. Civic leaders must be open to listening to others and collaborating with people from all backgrounds.
- Finding common ground and coming to agreement on difficult issues requires respect.
- Negative and biased political coverage hurts civic leadership and reduces the willingness of many people to become involved.
- Extreme polarization caused by a lack of collaboration inhibits progress on issues that are important to our community and society.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO BECOME CIVIC LEADERS

- The inspiration to become a civic leader begins with the family and the example set by parents.
- Mentoring and hands-on opportunities within the schools are essential for developing future civic leaders.
- Students need to seek out opportunities to develop civic leadership skills through involvement in programs available with school clubs, sports teams, community service organizations, student government, churches, and neighborhood associations.
- Young people can begin to develop as civic leaders by getting a well-rounded education, focusing on learning about others, and being informed about issues in their communities.

ROLE OF YOUTH IN DEVELOPING CIVIC LEADERS

- By inspiring their peers, young people are already taking up the role of civic leader.
- Mentoring those younger than us is a great way to model the skills and behaviors of civic leadership.
- Young people have a responsibility to step up to be civic leaders, especially when they have first-hand knowledge of issues and possible solutions. We need to push ourselves to grow.
- Civic leadership is a lifelong process. It starts with us and it starts now.