YOUTH & GOVERNMENT
PALO ALTO FAMILY YMCA

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What is Youth & Government?

- The high school portion of this program is called Model Legislature and Court and focuses on California state government. The middle school program is Model UN.

- Conferences
  - Training and Elections I and II occur in Fresno. These are more background and research based with regards to statewide government in California.
  - Sacramento Conference – gives delegates the opportunity to apply what they learned at the first two conferences as the high schoolers truly “take over the capitol”.

- Skills Built
  - Public speaking/debate
  - Research and writing
  - Evidence based persuasion
  - Civic engagement
Why This Program Matters

• Y&G builds crucial developmental assets in our community’s youth!
  • (3) – other adult relationships
  • (7) – community values youth
  • (8) – youth as resources
  • (18) – youth involvement in programs outside school
  • (27) – equality and social justice
  • (36) – peaceful conflict resolution
  • (37) – personal power
What the Youth Walk Away With

- While this program does look great on a resume, youth will get **SO MUCH MORE** out of it
  - Knowledge of statewide government
  - Leadership skills
  - A caring network of both peers and adults
  - Public speaking and debate skills
  - Critical thinking
  - Combination of transferable skills in a fun and social environment
  - Advocacy skills
Youth Advocacy in Y&G

• Many planned and casual conversations around world, nation, and state issues
• Meetings and conferences provide a safe space for youth to listen and form their own opinions on these issues
• Meeting others with diverse opinions from across the state allows for respectful debate and further forming of opinions
• This can (and has) lead to youth becoming particularly passionate about an issue and taking that passion outside of our program
• These advocacy skills are hugely transferable to everyday life as well as professional life
Bill Writing

• Leading up to the conference in Sacramento, delegates break up into small groups to draft bills around anything at the state level
• One group’s bill is chosen to be presented, debated, and voted on in Sacramento’s Senate and Assembly
• Bills taken to Sacramento do have the chance to be considered by true statewide leaders and become California law
  • The seat belt law is a result of a Y&G bill
  • Another bill changed the voting age in Berkeley
The UC Bill

Abstract

The people of the State of California do enact, as follows:

(a) The University of California system will place “University of California”, rather than the name of an individual institution, on graduating students’ diplomas and other official documents.

(b) Students will not have the option of having the name of their individual institution shown on their diplomas and other official documents.

(c) Official documents include but are not limited to: transcripts, letter headings, yearly grade reports, and final exam marks.

(d) Internal records of the university will still bear the full name of the individual institution.
Bill Hearing Night

• This event gives groups the opportunity to present and debate their bills in front of a panel of judges and receive feedback on both content and delivery of their argument.
• Takes place in Palo Alto City Hall.
• Allows community members as well as parents and guardians a chance to see the hard work our delegates put in during the program year.