

Examples of Engaging Youth

Here are a variety of ways organizations have included youth in decision-making positions.

1. Youth serve on the planning committee for a community foundation's annual holiday market to bring the service area together. To help bring more perspective from across the whole area, youth are included from different schools, neighborhoods, ages, and demographic backgrounds.
2. Families who are refugees in a community need housing, clothes, and guidance to navigate local systems. Young people recognize the needs in their school and form support groups, inviting nonprofit and community groups to join events that include new neighbors in activities and sharing.
3. A neighborhood association invites youth to serve on the planning committee for a block party. They help determine the scope, activities, and invitations. Youth from this specific neighborhood will be the target participants, reflecting the diversity within.
4. A faith-based organization is planning a workday in the neighborhood and seek to attract planning committee members of diverse ages and backgrounds. They recruit from social media, community centers, other faiths, schools and community-serving nonprofits.
5. Youth at school are interested in starting a peer-to-peer mentoring program and making the school environment more culturally inclusive. To see the program come to life successfully, a caring and committed adult provides guidance in seeking input and participation from a representative group of people who share what is needed and desired.
6. A local senior retirement community recognizes that some residents need help identifying spam links and communicating with grandchildren. The director of the facility recruits youth from diverse community-serving organizations for an orientation and to establish what is needed, align schedules, and discuss expectations. The youth and seniors share ideas to involve more youth and build intergenerational relationships.
7. A nonprofit organization that serves youth and families has a very active board of trustees. To ensure that the perspectives of different community demographics are represented, youth on the board have the same voting power as adults. To start this process the board and staff of the organization review the bylaws to make sure the age of trustees legally includes minors, workplace culture and procedures, potential barriers to engaging youth effectively, partner organizations that can help recruit diverse youth, and the criteria that the youth must meet for the organization's needs.
8. A youth community survey organized by the youth council indicates that food insecurity is a major concern for children in the county. Young people identified 12 distribution sites and raised funds and recruited volunteers to fill boxes with donated foods.
9. With funding, a youth group planned an implicit bias training for their members and invited other community leaders to join and learn together.