



# BELLEVUE YOUTH LINK

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**2011-2012 Review and Recommendations  
April 2012**





Bellevue Youth Link is a partnership between the City of Bellevue and Bellevue School District

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## THE ROLE OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN BELLEVUE

Since 1990, Youth Link has made the City of Bellevue a national innovator in youth leadership and involvement. This has been significant because, as the National League of Cities notes, “Nothing is more important to the health of our democracy than the active engagement of young people in representative government at the local level.”

This report summarizes the Youth Link Board’s work evaluating Youth Link’s role, researching national best practices, developing governance proposals, investigating partnerships, and proposing next steps.

## YOUTH LINK PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Youth Link is a youth leadership program that is a partnership between the City of Bellevue and the Bellevue School District. Youth Link was founded in 1990 to give youth an active voice in the community. Youth Link is unique because it provides leadership training by doing – essentially “on-the-job” training for teens. Youth work as equals with adults and are empowered to identify and then implement youth priorities for Bellevue. Youth Link gives young people the responsibility and ability to have their voices heard by elected officials and community leaders. Since its formation in 1990, Youth Link has engaged nearly 8,000 young people.

## PROJECTS

Members of the Youth Link Board, Youth Council, and Youth Link Action Teams have completed more than 70 projects since 1990, including Ground Zero Teen Center, Bellevue Skate Park, Community Leadership Awards, Youth Involvement Conference, Bellevue Youth Court, Teen Talk Radio Program, Safe Rides Program, and Youth Wall of Fame. Many of these projects have been successfully spun off to local non-profits. Others are still operated by Youth Link members.

## CITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

In December 2010, as part of the budget review process, Council asked the Youth Link Board to reevaluate Youth Link’s role and respond to two goals by early 2012.

**Goal 1. Governance Model:** Review, evaluate, and recommend an organizational structure or governance model for Bellevue’s youth leadership program.

**Goal 2. Long-Term Community Partnerships:** Establish long-term partnerships with the Bellevue community – dollars, resources, labor, or in-kind donations from businesses, individuals, schools, non-profits, and other organizations.

### **YOUTH LEADERSHIP BEST PRACTICES**

The Youth Link Board responded by conducting a year-long exploration of youth leadership models, addressing why Bellevue should continue to be a “youth-friendly” community, if and why City government should be involved, and how youth engagement should be implemented.

The Board began its work by holding a planning retreat focused around key questions related to youth involvement. Following the retreat, the Board established a “Youth Link Committee” consisting of board and community members that was divided into two working sub-committees, one on Governance and one on Partnerships (Funding). The committees reviewed national data on youth leadership best practices; met with experts in the field of youth leadership and development; wrote, distributed, and analyzed a survey on Youth Link’s impact that received nearly 1,500 responses and indicated that 90% of youth felt that youth should be actively involved in the community; researched a list of potential community partners; prepared a partnership presentation; and then began meeting with potential partners to solicit their involvement.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As the Youth Link Board/Committee researched successful models and approaches, and compared Youth Link’s operations with the 31 reviewed programs around the country, committee members concluded that Youth Link is well-aligned with national best practices.

#### **Governance**

The Board, after reviewing the strengths and challenges of Youth Link, recommends an “enhanced” Youth Leadership model that transitions the current Youth Link Board to an eight-person youth leadership board (four youth and four adults, two-year terms of office) and maintains the current Bellevue Youth Council.

Responsibilities of the Youth Leadership Board would include:

- Continue to serve as the official “youth voice” for the community;
- Establish and provide oversight for a structured youth leadership curriculum to serve as a revenue generating program; and
- Assume a proactive role in community initiatives, such as Eastside Pathways, Nourishing Network, and other related youth issues.

Responsibilities of the Youth Council would include:

- Host the Youth Involvement Conference (every two years);
- Host the Annual Community Leadership Awards; and
- Implement Action Teams. Current Action Teams include:

- **Communications**, which focuses on marketing, Bellevue Patch “*Youth Connect*” column, YouthLink.com, Facebook Youth Link Alumni Group, etc.
- **Special Events**, which includes the Youth Involvement Conference Planning Committee and Community Leadership Awards Planning Committee.
- **Social Services**, which includes teens working on the Teen Closet Clothing Bank, Bellevue Youth Court, and Kids Care Coat Drive Project.
- **Arts Education**, which focuses on the Youth Link Arts Project.

### **Partnerships**

Members of the Partnerships Committee devoted careful attention to the possibility of attracting support from local business and philanthropic partners.

From August through October 2011, the Partnerships Committee contacted more than 50 Bellevue businesses and corporations to gauge their initial interest in financial support for youth leadership in the City. Based on those findings, the Partnerships Committee created their **2012 Partnership Campaign for Youth Link**. Committee members developed a partnership plan, which included several levels of proposed partnership levels in which business could contribute and support Youth Link.

To implement the Partnership Campaign, the Board recommends that the Youth Link Board establish and oversee a separate fundraising entity that would consist of adults with interest and expertise in fund development. The fundraising entity would report to and be overseen by the Youth Link Board. This entity would:

- Secure funds for the Youth Leadership program through the implementation of the “Shared Fiscal Responsibility” model;
- Implement the Partnership Campaign;
- Invite interested youth to sit on the fundraising entity (optional);
- Engage youth to be a part of the annual Partnership Campaign; and
- Evaluate fundraising efforts in two years.

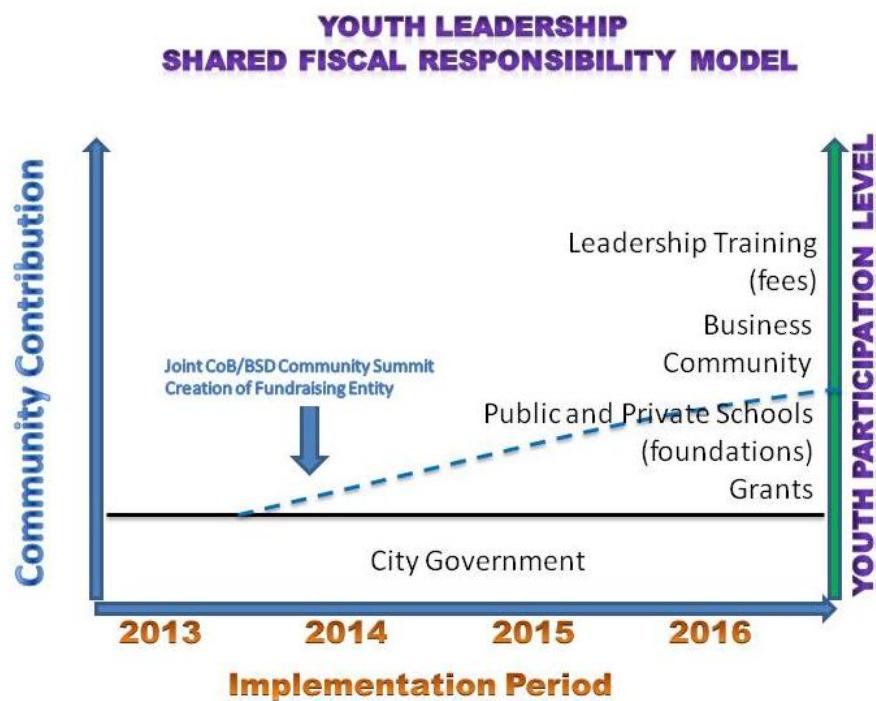
### **Funding**

The Youth Link Board recommends that the City of Bellevue continue to fund youth leadership at the 2011-2012 budget allocation of \$230,000 for the annual operations of Youth Link as Youth Link transitions to a “Shared Fiscal Responsibility” (SFR) Model. The SFR Model demonstrates a sustained funding level in which the City of Bellevue would maintain funding for Youth Link at 2011-2012 budget levels. Increased funding for youth leadership would be secured through a fund development plan that includes an annual Partnership Campaign, foundation grants, and revenue-generating youth leadership programs.

The SFR Model reflects a community’s fiscal response to providing youth leadership development in Bellevue. When asked who is primarily responsible for providing youth leadership in Bellevue, 45.2% of the survey respondents listed the City of Bellevue as “highly

responsible," while 49% and 41% respectively listed community groups and schools as "somewhat responsible."

As the chart below shows, the SFR Model builds from a steady base of City support, with a public/private fundraising effort that is planned to grow over time to support Youth Link activities and programs.



# THE ROLE OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN BELLEVUE

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Youth Link was founded in 1990 to meet the challenges of a changing city. A background report<sup>i</sup> prepared at the time noted that Bellevue was in the process of transitioning from an affluent bedroom community to a diverse urban center, with a growing number of children who faced roadblocks to achieving healthy development and self-sufficiency.

The report noted, "As Bellevue becomes more and more the urban center of the Eastside, residents will increasingly seek services here rather than in Seattle... These challenges may require non-traditional

solutions, changes in attitudes, flexibility and the commitment to respond quickly, as well as cooperation among the many local agencies and organizations involved with children and youth."

Youth Link's founding coincided with a growing national awareness of the importance of involving young people in their communities to help them become leaders and to give them a stake in the future.

The National League of Cities noted in a report, "Nothing is more important to the health of our democracy than the active engagement of young people in representative government at the local level."<sup>ii</sup> The report went on to explain that,

Concerted efforts to encourage youth participation and involvement also can help municipal leaders make better decisions and wiser public investments.

Youth frequently are seen as problems to be fixed, but they can be assets and resources when mayors and city councilmembers are seeking effective solutions to community ills. Young people are the foremost experts on their experiences, needs, and interactions with other segments of the community. Involving youth in local decision-making taps this important knowledge.

## **YOUTH LINK'S ROLE**

Youth Link was founded to make Bellevue as a city where young people are involved, valued, respected, and listened to; where they feel safe and are safe; and where they can have fun. Ultimately, the goal of Youth Link was to enhance the quality of life for all youth in the community.

That effort has made Bellevue a leader and innovator in youth involvement. Youth Link has been approached from cities in New York, the Midwest, Arizona, California, and throughout the Puget Sound region for help starting a youth council, youth and adult board, youth development program, or a specific program such as Safe Rides, skate parks, or youth courts. In addition, Bellevue has won regional, statewide, and national recognition for Youth Link and its programs:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Award</b>
2011	America's Promise Alliance	National 100 Best Communities for Young People
2010	America's Promise Alliance	National 100 Best Communities for Young People
2008	America's Promise Alliance	National 100 Best Communities for Young People
2008	Library of Congress	Recognition of the 110 <sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session
2007	America's Promise Alliance	National 100 Best Communities for Young People
2006	America's Promise Alliance	National 100 Best Communities for Young People
2000	Mid-East King County Network	Youth Asset Builders Award (Skate Park)
2000	WA Recreation & Parks Association	Most Outstanding Teen Program (Youth Link)
1999	WA State Traffic Safety Commission	Traffic Safety Superstar Award (Safe Rides Program)
1997	WA Recreation & Parks Association	Outstanding Teen Program (Teen Job Link)
1997	Mid-East King County Community Public Health & Safety Network	Outstanding Youth Program (Youth Link)
1994	Boy Scouts of America	Recognition of Safe Rides Program
1994	Association of Washington Cities	Best Youth Program in the State (Youth Link)
1994	Washington State Traffic Safety Commission	Excellence in Youth/Government Partnership (Safe Rides Program)
1992	National League of Cities	Innovation for Youth Award (Youth Link)

## **2000 EVALUATION**

In 2000, after 10 years of existence, Youth Link was evaluated to assess the extent to which it was providing youth programs and activities, fostering a youth "voice" in Bellevue, developing leadership skills in young people, and providing service to the community. A local consulting firm, Clegg and Associates, was contracted to carry out the evaluation, which included written surveys, telephone interviews, focus group discussions, and a review of Youth Link's written records.<sup>iii</sup> The evaluation concluded that:

Youth Link has successfully followed its mission. It has served as an effective catalyst by creating programs identified by teens in partnership with adults that are then spun off into and supported by the community... Youth Link has also developed a recognized "voice" in the community, a place where issues of importance to youth are raised and a place where City Council and policy makers turn when they want input and ideas from Bellevue teens.

The evaluation made a number of recommendations to strengthen Youth Link. These recommendations included suggestions in the areas of communications, programs, leadership development, community service, and program administration:

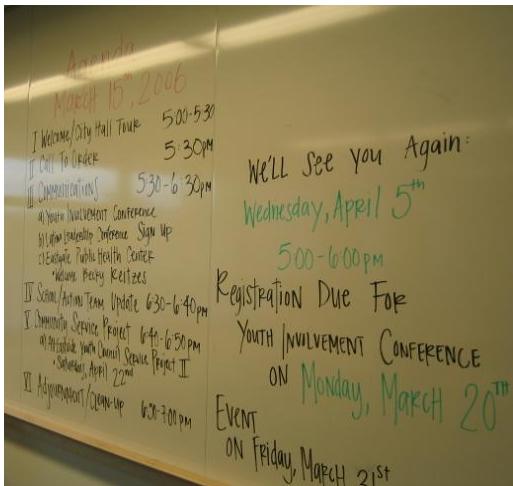
- Increase marketing, outreach, and communication about Youth Link to all sectors of the community, including students, adults, businesses, and community leaders.
- Improve relationships between policy makers, community leaders, and the Bellevue Youth Council.
- Develop and refine outcomes with participants and staff including defining what it means to be a "teen voice" for the community.
- Increase technical training opportunities for *Outspoken* (bimonthly newspaper) staff throughout the year.
- Reach out to expand opportunities to teens from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Recruit and then develop leadership activities for the non-traditional teen leader.
- Strategies to recruit a broader group and retain participants should be developed and implemented by the Youth Link Board and Bellevue Youth Council.
- Improve record collection, including identifying data to be collected by staff.
- Review allocation process and budgets for Youth Link.

## **2011-2012 REEVALUATION**

Following the 2000 evaluation, Youth Link continued its work, broadening its efforts to ensure it would be a forum for all youth, and continuing to propose and implement projects to serve youth and community members. By 2011, it was time for a reevaluation. The need to evaluate Youth Link's role and future was heightened by the economic downturn, which had resulted in significant budget cutbacks.

# YOUTH LINK PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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## A VOICE FOR YOUTH

Bellevue Youth Link is a youth leadership program that is a partnership between the City of Bellevue and Bellevue Public Schools. Youth Link was founded in 1990 to give young people an active voice in the community and an opportunity to make a difference.

Youth Link is unique because it provides leadership training by doing – essentially “on-the-job” training for teens. Youth work as equals with adults and are empowered to identify and then implement youth priorities for Bellevue. Youth Link gives young people both the responsibility and ability to have their voices

heard by elected officials and community leaders.

Youth Link consists of the Youth Link Board, the Youth Council, and a number of Action Teams.

## YOUTH LINK BOARD

The Youth Link Board is comprised of six young people, six adults, and one liaison each from the City Council and School Board, all working in equal partnership. One teen and one adult serve as co-chairs. The Board’s primary responsibilities are to advise the City Council and City Manager on youth matters, oversee the “Action Agenda” of the Bellevue Youth Council, and award funding for community youth projects, using a \$100,000 annual Implementation Fund to help germinate projects. (This fund was cut in the 2011-2012 budget.) Appendix A lists the members of the Youth Link Board.

## YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Council is Youth Link’s main organizational body. It meets twice a month to plan community projects based on Bellevue youth priorities that are identified at the biennial Youth Involvement Conference. Members plan and organize activities that come from the Youth Involvement Conference and Bellevue Youth Council, such as the Trick or Treat for Cans Food Drive, Crossroads Thanksgiving Dinner, Kids Care Coat Drive, Gumbo Night with the Bellevue

City Council, Community Leadership Awards, Youth Involvement Conference, and the Youth Leadership Academy & 6<sup>th</sup> Street Fair. The Youth Council currently has youth from a diverse array of ethnic groups and from private, public, and home schools throughout Bellevue; nearly three-quarters of the members are youth of color.

### **ACTION TEAMS**

Action Teams are smaller committees that determine and lead implementation on specific priorities that are identified at the biennial Youth Involvement Conference. Current Action Teams include:

- **Communications**, which focuses on marketing, Bellevue Patch “*Youth Connect*” column, YouthLink.com, Facebook Youth Link Alumni Group, etc.
- **Special Events**, which includes the Youth Involvement Conference Planning Committee and Community Leadership Awards Planning Committee.
- **Social Services**, which includes teens working on the Teen Closet Clothing Bank, Bellevue Youth Court, and Kids Care Coat Drive Project.
- **Arts Education**, which focuses on the Youth Link Arts Project.

Teens apply to be part of the Bellevue Youth Council and any of the Action Teams. Teens involved in Youth Link come from Bellevue public middle and high schools, Issaquah Middle School, Overlake School, Sacred Heart School, Lakeside School, Forest Ridge School, Bellevue Christian, and other private schools and home schools.

Since 1990, 4,000 youth and families have been served by a Youth Link program or project, and a total of 7,698 teens have been involved in Youth Link in some capacity. Most Youth Link graduates have gone on to higher education, with many alumni completing advanced degrees.

## **YOUTH LINK BUDGET**

Until 2011, the Youth Link Board received an annual Implementation Fund of \$100,000 to fund youth-related projects in the Bellevue community. The Youth Link Implementation Fund provided the initial funding for Skate Park, Ground Zero Teen Center, South Bellevue Community Center Climbing Wall, South Bellevue Community Center Challenge Course, Teen Closet, Youth Involvement Conferences, and Community Leadership Awards.

Youth Link's General Fund budget, Implementation Fund, and City staff support have been reduced in recent years due to the economic downturn. As a result, Youth Link will operate with significantly lower resources in 2012 than it did 20 years ago in 1990.

### **Comparison of Budgets: 1990 to 2012**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Staff Support</b>	<b>Implementation Fund</b>
<b>1990</b>	\$450,000	5.0 FTE	\$100,000
<b>2012</b>	\$230,000	1.5 FTE	--

### **Youth Link General Fund Budget Trends**

<b>Year</b>	<b>General Fund Budget*</b>
2009	\$334,244
2010	\$347,675
2011	\$220,000
2012	\$230,000

*\*Includes General Fund budget but not Youth Link Implementation Fund.*

# PROJECTS

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## FROM YOUTH... FOR YOUTH

Over the years, Youth Link has supported more than 70 youth-led projects. These projects serve youth from throughout the community while offering young people a chance to gain leadership skills.

Youth Link projects come from youth. Every two years, Youth Link hosts a citywide Youth Involvement Conference that is open to all middle and high school age youth in Bellevue. The day-long conference introduces leadership and community projects to teens. At the Conference, the youth participants create priorities for the community. The Youth Link

Board adopts these priorities and works with the Bellevue Youth Council and Action Teams to implement projects that respond to these priorities. Some projects serve teens and families who are in need. Others reach out to those who do not typically get involved or who have interests that are not being met. Some result in permanent facilities, while others are annual trainings or events. Still others give young people a chance to learn new skills and make new friends. Many of Youth Link's projects have proven so successful that they have become permanent and have been spun off to local community organizations or city departments to coordinate ongoing operations. Some of Youth Link's projects include:

- **Bellevue Youth Court:** Bellevue Youth Court is a partnership between the City of Bellevue and King County to reduce the recidivism rates among juveniles who have committed crimes. Youth Court was launched in 2008 and hears two court cases each month. A group of 50 young people have been trained to serve as judges, jurors, bailiffs, clerks, and prosecuting and defense advocates.
- **Teen Closet:** Teen Closet was started to address the age and style gap in most local clothing banks. It was organized by a Youth Council Action Team and opened in 2001. Since then, Teen Closet has attracted two partners: Plato's Closet, a second hand clothing store for teens, has become the main supplier of donations; and World Impact Network operates and hosts the monthly clothing distributions.
- **Kids Care Coat Drive:** The Kids Care Coat Drive was first organized in 2004 by a teen in response to growing need in the community. The drive has become a Bellevue tradition, and the teen who first organized it received national recognition for his work. The annual drive is held each fall to help young people without enough warm clothing. Distribution boxes are placed at Bellevue schools, community centers, and shopping

malls, collecting more than 8,000 coats. Youth Link members coordinate the drive each year.

- **Ground Zero Teen Center:** Ground Zero provides a safe place for kids to hang out, socialize, take classes, play or hear music, and participate in a wide variety of activities. Ground Zero reaches out to teens who may not be attracted to other organized activities. The program is now operated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue.
- **Skate Parks:** Bellevue has four skate parks thanks to the leadership of Youth Link: Bellevue Indoor Skatepark, Highland Skate Plaza, Crossroads Bowl, and Lakemont Skate Court. All four are safe and supervised areas for skateboarding. Youth Link members also helped create the Crag Climbing Wall at the South Bellevue Community Center. All of these facilities are managed by the Bellevue Parks & Community Services Department.
- **Youth Involvement Conference:** Bellevue's Youth Involvement Conference is held every other spring. It is organized by and for youth to help them "Step Up, Speak Out, and Break Through!" The conference features workshops on everything from technology to community involvement.
- **Youth Connection Newsletter:** *Youth Connection* is a bimonthly online newsletter that is written by teens and produced in collaboration with Bellevue Patch. Its paper partner is a monthly newsletter called *Outspoken* that is distributed throughout the Bellevue School District each month.
- **South Bellevue Community Center – Climbing Wall and Challenge Course:** Youth Link supported and funded the need for youth activities and a community center located in south Bellevue. The Challenge course program is one of the key elements in youth leadership, helping youth develop team building skills and self-esteem. In addition to organizing teens to testify on the need for structured activities in south Bellevue, Youth Link provided funding for the installation of the Climbing Wall and Challenge Course at the South Bellevue Community Center.
- **Gumbo Night:** Gumbo Night is one of the highlights of the year. It allows Bellevue City Councilmembers and youth to share a meal and connect with each other outside of the formal meeting environment of City Hall.
- **Youth Leadership Academy:** The Youth Leadership Academy, which is held each summer, focuses on personal leadership development and group processes.

These projects are only a few of the many Youth Link has sponsored over the years. Others include community forums on youth violence, food drives, disaster relief efforts, employment training, diversity programs, assistance for senior citizens, mentoring projects, local TV and radio shows, a website, open mic nights, environmental restoration efforts, Community Leadership Awards, Day of Caring partnerships with United Way, tutoring programs, the Youth Wall of Fame, dances, and outreach to Bellevue's high school and middle schools.

# CITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

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## 2011-2012 BUDGET PROCESS

As part of the 2011-2012 budget process, the City Council made the decision to reduce Youth Link's budget, removing the Youth Link \$100,000 Implementation Fund and reducing Youth Link's operational budget from \$350,000 to \$230,000. Councilmembers noted that the budget reductions were a response to the difficult economic climate, and asked that, in response to these changes, the Youth Link Board evaluate Youth Link's structure and current financing to make recommendations by early 2012 on a proposed governance model and funding structure.

Councilmembers noted that, after 20 years, it was time to reassess Youth Link's role and to set a course for its future. Councilmembers expressed their hope that the community's youth leadership efforts would:

- Provide youth leadership development;
- Promote the youth voice and offer a forum for youth opinions;
- Focus on youth action and implementation (instead of adult action);
- Provide the services that youth need and want in today's environment;
- Promote leadership development as a structured course of study;
- Holistically represent Bellevue's youth;
- Be financially sustainable and resource rich;
- Create a deep and lasting connection with the community;
- Have an impact on the community and youth;
- Create brand recognition; and
- Provide relevant events

The Council's directive was based on two goals:

### **GOAL 1: GOVERNANCE MODEL**

*Review, evaluate, and recommend an organizational structure or governance model for Bellevue's youth leadership program.*

**Purpose:** Councilmembers noted that Youth Link has been a successful youth leadership program for more than 20 years. Because the needs of young people change at a rapid pace, however, they indicated that it was important to occasionally reassess whether the services Youth Link provides are the services needed by today's youth.

The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education & Families notes,<sup>iv</sup> "studies consistently show that youth in civic engagement programs are more likely to graduate, adopt productive attitudes about their role in the community, and avoid risky behaviors." The structure of a youth leadership program should enable youth to identify youth needs and then take action to address them, thereby improving indicators of well-being.

**Criteria for Review:** Councilmembers asked that the Youth Link Board evaluate each potential governance model in terms of its ability to:

- **Foster a youth-driven approach.** The proposed structure should allow a youth-driven agenda, youth-driven implementation of projects, and youth empowerment to create changes.
- **Give youth a voice.** Elected officials should create an environment that respects youth perspective.
- **Reflect current youth needs.** Governance models should be evaluated based on how well they can respond to the community's perception of youth needs and the youth voice on youth needs (what youth say they want), that affect the needs of Bellevue youth.
- **Serve the larger community.** The selected model should allow Youth Link to serve the broader community, beyond youth.
- **Represent all youth, including Bellevue's diversity.** The selected organizational structure should ensure that Youth Link is open to all youth and includes mechanisms to encourage greater youth involvement, especially from underserved youth in middle and high school, including public schools, private schools, and home schools.
- **Provide leadership skills.** Empower youth to initiate, implement, and take action. Youth Link's recommended structure should provide opportunities for youth to gain leadership skills.

- **Provide mentor relationships.** Youth leadership would include a strong working relationship between youth and the three central elements of the city: business, community, and government.
- **Secure sustained funding.** Funding for youth leadership development in a consistent manner and in amounts substantial enough to support a long-term youth leadership program.

## GOAL 2: LONG-TERM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

*Establish long-term partnerships with the Bellevue community, including dollars, resources, labor, or in-kind donations from businesses, individuals, schools, non-profits, and other community organizations.*

**Purpose:** Councilmembers noted that youth are our leaders of tomorrow, and they need training and opportunities to be ready for the future. Bellevue Youth Link has been providing youth leadership training and education for more than 20 years, but it needs the community's support to continue to provide the best opportunities for Bellevue's future leaders.

**Criteria for Review:** Councilmembers asked that the Youth Link Board evaluate potential partnership opportunities in terms of their ability to:

- **Reflect community values and goals.** Potential partners should respect and reflect the community's larger values and goals.
- **Connect with youth perspectives.** Potential partners should have a relationship with serving youth and should help Youth Link highlight youth perspectives.
- **Increase Youth Link's name recognition.** Potential partnership opportunities should build on Youth Link's reputation and help increase its name recognition in the community.

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP BEST PRACTICES

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## GUIDING QUESTIONS AND GOALS

To respond to the City Council's directives, the Youth Link Board began by identifying a set of basic questions to be answered about the overall nature of youth leadership and involvement in Bellevue. These questions included:

- Who should support youth engagement in Bellevue?
  - Why should the City be engaged in youth leadership?
  - Who should be responsible for the youth leadership program?
- Who should fund the youth leadership program?
  - What are the best practices in youth leadership programming?

The Board held a retreat in April, which was led by Greg Williamson, Director of Learning and Teaching Support from the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to address these questions in more detail and to map out a work plan to respond to the Council's directives. At the retreat, Board members reaffirmed their commitment to the notion that youth are not the "target" of Youth Link's activities; rather, they are the participants and actors, whose voices must inform the review process.

Youth Link Board members also identified a number of goals for the outcomes they would like to see in Bellevue's youth leadership program in three to five years. These included:

- An active youth voice in the community;
- Youth leadership in guiding Youth Link programs and projects;
- Projects that respond to youth needs, especially priorities identified by youth and for youth;
- Youth "driving and owning" project implementation;
- Connection to and relationships with the community;
- Holistic youth leadership development program with both a formal education program and youth "on-the-job" training;
- Brand recognition for the program; and
- Sustaining resources, including funds, volunteer support, and in-kind contributions.

The Board then organized a Youth Link Committee consisting of two sub-committees to address the Council directives: one on Governance and one on Partnerships. The sub-committees included members from the Bellevue community, as well as from the Youth Link Board, Youth Council, and Action Teams.

### **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: RESEARCH ON BEST PRACTICES**

Governance Committee members began their work by reviewing national research on youth development programs. A literature review conducted by The Finance Project<sup>v</sup> noted that “youth engagement is central to effective practices that aim to support the healthy growth and development of young people.” (p 7) The report went on to state:

Available research and evaluation studies demonstrate that youth engagement has positive effects on young people and the adults and organizations working with them. These opportunities enable youth to contribute to their own development by applying and learning life skills and to the development of their communities by designing solutions to address local issues. Involving youth in decision-making also positively affects adults and helps change organizational culture. (p 8)

The report identified three successful types of youth engagement approaches:

- **Youth in research and evaluation**, which involves young people in planning, designing, and delivering services.
- **Youth in community organizing/advocacy**, this encourages youth to be leaders to create positive changes in their communities.
- **Youth in decision-making and governance**, which includes young people directly in making decisions about policy issues and programs that affect their communities.

A new guide published by the National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) with support from the Surdna Foundation provides a definition and framework for what authentic youth engagement in municipal government can look like. The report, *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders*,<sup>vi</sup> is informed by a year-long process in which the YEF Institute gathered and synthesized the knowledge and expertise of more than 300 youth development experts, academics, municipal leaders, community organization partners, and young adults and youth leaders from across the nation through a series of focus groups, surveys, and interviews conducted in 2008 and 2009.

Drawing upon the experiences of communities with the most robust youth engagement initiatives, the guide defines **authentic youth civic engagement (AYCE)**, in which young people:

- Are seen as valuable participants in the work of local governments;

- Are prepared to take on meaningful roles in addressing relevant issues; and
- Work in partnership with adults who respect and support them.

The AYCE framework consists of four critical elements for a successful initiative:

1. **A setting** in which the civic climate of the community is welcoming and inviting to youth, acknowledging their role in public policy, planning, and decision making.
2. **A structure** in which the organization and system that supports AYCE meets both the needs of the local government and the interests of the young people.
3. **A strategy** that offers a wide-range of activities and provides and provides youth with a breadth and depth of meaningful opportunities for participate in local government.
4. **Support** from adult allies, both within and outside local government, which enables the young people involved in AYCE efforts to have a real impact on issues that concern them.

The framework is enriched by the voices of youth and adult leaders and complemented by a broad array of tools and resources. AYCE reinforces what actions cities can take to make local government processes more youth-friendly, and how to develop a continuum of opportunities for involvement, consultation, representation, and shared leadership.

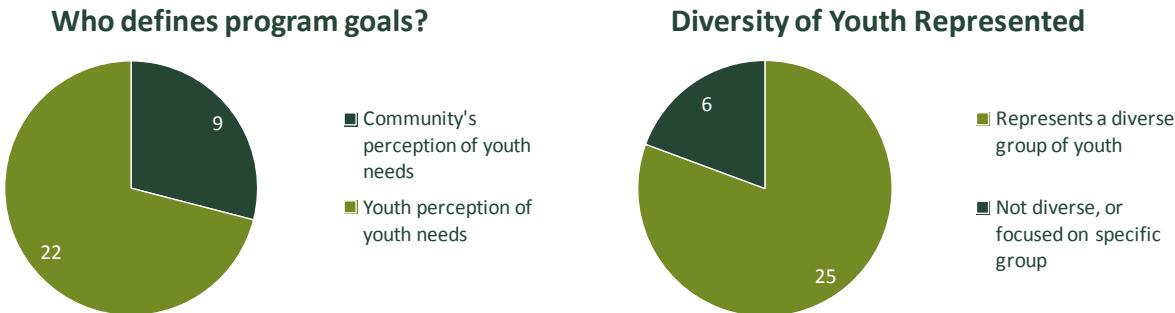
### **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: REVIEW OF YOUTH PROGRAMS**

With this information about the attributes national experts have determined to be essential for successful youth development programs, committee members next researched youth engagement and involvement programs around the country to determine how Youth Link's governance structure, philosophy, and programs compare with similar programs in other places.

Committee members researched a total of **31 wide-ranging, youth leadership programs**. These included programs within a single city, as well as statewide and national programs; non-profit, for-profit, and government-run programs; and programs that are open to all interested youth, as well as those that target specific groups by ethnicity or circumstances (such as foster youth). A complete list of these programs, along with information from the committee's research can be found in Appendix C.

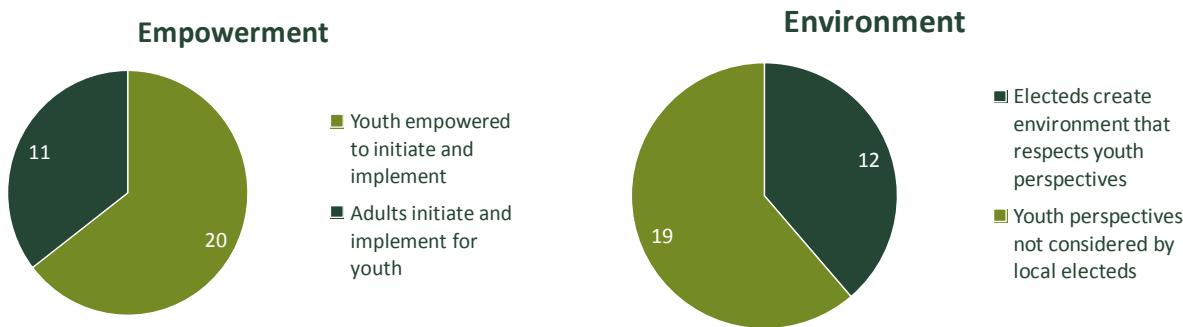
**Youth-led versus youth-serving programs.** All of the programs the committee researched operate based on the community's perception of youth needs. Most of the programs also incorporate youth's perception of youth needs into their philosophy and programs. However, not all of them do. As the chart below shows, nearly 30% of the programs studied were based only on community perceptions and did not incorporate youth in identifying youth needs.

**Diversity.** Most of the programs (80% of those studied) represent a diverse group of youth, though some, like Youth Link have not quite achieved the level of diversity they sought. Some of the programs, however, are not diverse because they are targeted at specific groups, such as African Americans or foster children.



**Empowerment.** Most of the programs, like Youth Link, strive to empower youth to identify problems, initiate solutions, and implement projects (65% of those studied). Some of the programs studied, however, are much more adult-focused, with adults working on behalf of youth.

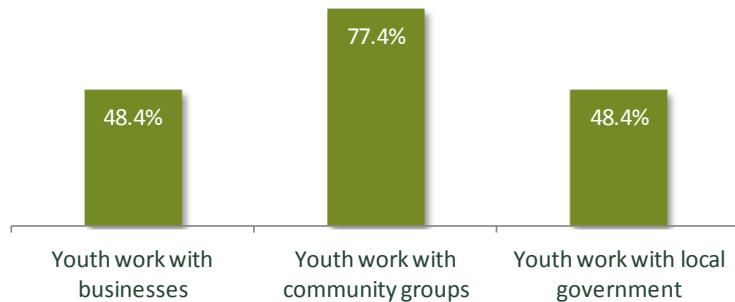
**Environment.** Youth empowerment comes at least partly from an environment that values and respects their opinions. In nearly 40% of the programs studied, local elected officials have worked to create an environment in which youth perspectives are respected.



**Working relationships.** Programs that aim to develop youth leadership often accomplish that by helping youth develop solid working relationships with adult decision-makers – with adults in business, community groups, and/or local government.

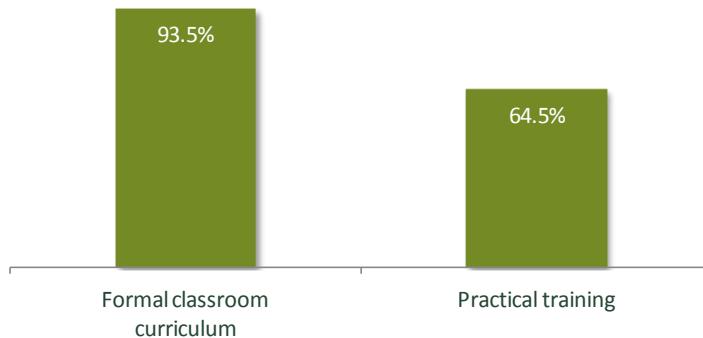
As the next chart shows, a total of 48% of the programs had developed working relationships between youth and local businesses; 77% between youth and community groups; and 48% between youth and local government.

## Working Relationships



**Leadership training.** Nearly all the programs the committee studied (93.5%) had some type of formal curriculum or classroom training on leadership development. A smaller, but still substantial number of the programs (64.5%) offered practical leadership training, along the lines of Youth Link's "on-the-job" leadership training approach.

## Leadership Training



**Funding sustainability and sources.** More than two-thirds of the programs studied indicated that they had a sustainable funding plan. Only 19% of the programs studied were funded by shared responsibility of government, community, and business.

**As members researched successful models and approaches, and compared Youth Link's operations with 31 programs around the country, committee members concluded that Youth Link is well aligned with national best practices.**

In its current format, Youth Link follows the established criteria of the National League of Cities' AYCE guidelines. Youth Link is an official, formally established entity that involves youth on an equal footing with adults. Youth Link's programs and projects have all been proposed, planned, and developed by youth. Youth Link leadership training programs and awards help develop and acknowledge youth leadership and help young people form ties and build social networks with

youth from different neighborhoods and schools. And Youth Link's civic engagement programs such as the biennial Youth Involvement Conference and Gumbo Night give youth the chance to meet and build relationships with elected officials and community leaders.

### **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: YOUTH SURVEY**

As members continued their research on different governance models, they also developed a survey to identify youth needs and perceptions and to test how well their goals for Youth Link had been realized. The full text of the survey's questions as well as a summary of results can be found in Appendix B at the end of this report.

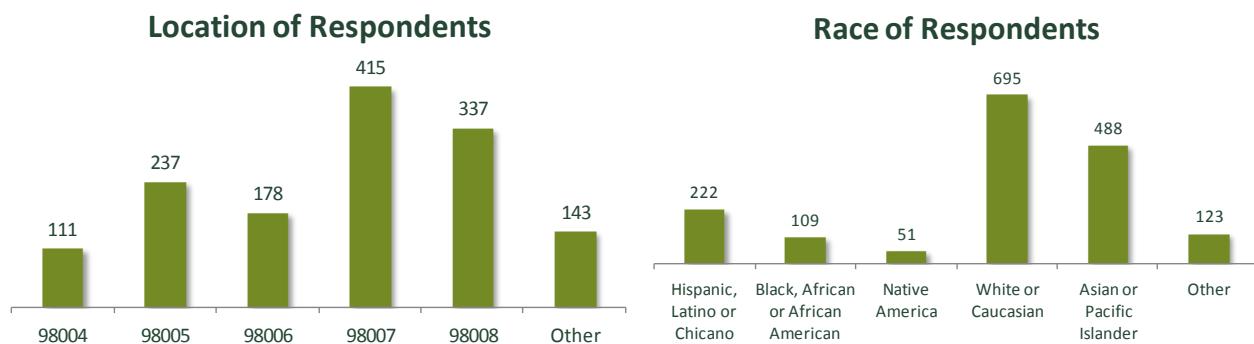
**A total of 1,480 completed surveys were collected and analyzed. The key finding was that 90% of respondents believe that it is either somewhat or very important for youth to be actively involved in the community. Yet, the common opinion is that only 7% of youth are actively involved.**

The survey was administered through Social Studies classes in Bellevue public middle and high schools, as well as at either electronically or on paper at the following sites and events: Ground Zero concerts, Jubilee REACH, Teen XL, Lake Hills Library, Landing/YMCA, Bellevue Youth Theatre, Bellevue SkatePark, Crossroads Youth Party, Magic Season Ice Rink, Bellevue Square, Crossroads Mall, South Bellevue Community Center, YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue, and Dream Team Cheer.

Youth and adults on the committee worked together to frame the questions, build the survey using an online survey tool, administer the survey, and analyze the results. Youth and adults trained and worked together to develop and administer the survey, to ensure effective feedback on Bellevue issues and priorities. So, even as the survey provided valuable information about the needs and interests of youth in Bellevue, it also provided a valuable leadership development and skill-building opportunity for the young people who were involved in developing, administering, and analyzing it.

**Survey Respondents:** A total of 1,480 completed surveys were collected and analyzed.

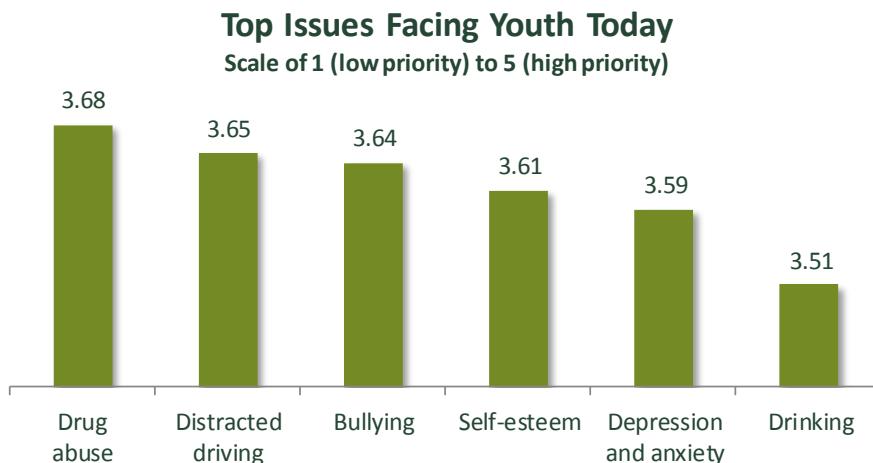
- 1,250 surveys were completed on the Internet and 230 were completed on paper.
- Survey had a good distribution among Bellevue zip codes, with the most surveys from residents of 98007 (29%) and 98008 (24%).
- The race/ethnicity of survey respondents generally mirrors the overall student population of Bellevue, with a little less than half reporting White/Caucasian (47%), and the highest percentage of minority populations reporting Asian or Pacific Islander (33%).
- 90% of respondents were between the ages of 16 and 21, with an average of 184 responses collected for every grade level between 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The vast majority of responses came from students of the Bellevue School District, with few or none from Issaquah, Renton, or Lake Washington districts. A small number of private school and home school students were represented.



**Survey Findings:** The key finding was that 90% of respondents believe that it is either somewhat or very important for youth to be actively involved in the community. Yet, the common opinion is that only 7% of youth are actively involved.

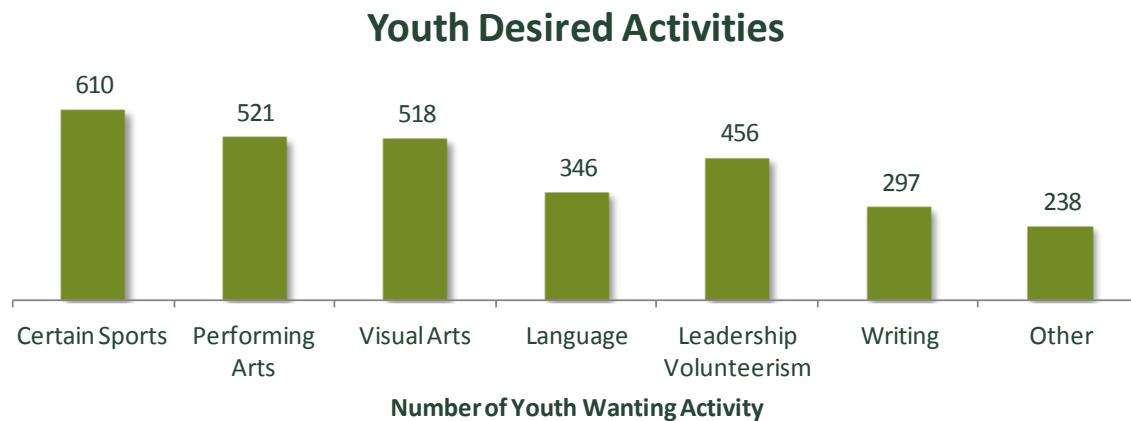
Widespread knowledge of Youth Link and Youth Link-sponsored programs is low among the student population. Of 22 listed Youth Link-sponsored programs, only the following were recognized by a majority of respondents: AVID, Bellevue Skate Parks, Ground Zero Teen Center, and Crossroads Community Center Middle School Dances.

Respondents identified the top issues that youth face today as: drug abuse/drug treatment, distracted driving (texting while driving), bullying (in life and cyber), self-esteem, depression/anxiety, and underage drinking.



In answer to the question about the activities they would take part in if those activities were provided more often, a majority of those surveyed indicated that they would like to participate in a sport, the visual and performing arts, language or writing, or leadership activities. The number of students who indicated an interest in an activity but could not participate due to lack of availability, particularly in the areas of sports (610 out of 1,460 who answered the question)

and the visual and performing arts (more than 1,000 out of 1,460 who answered the question) indicates that there is substantial unmet demand for youth activities.



The City of Bellevue, schools, and community groups (in that order) were seen as the parties responsible for providing youth leadership programs. The City, in particular, was identified as responsible for youth leadership, with 46.2% of respondents indicating that the community perceives that the City has the highest responsibility for youth leadership programs and an additional 38.7% indicating that the City is somewhat responsible for these programs.

In addition, respondents indicated that important skills to learn through a leadership program should include working with other youth, general leadership training, and conflict management.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE: RESEARCH ON BEST PRACTICES**

The Partnerships Committee began its work by reviewing national research and the practices of cities and youth leadership organizations around the country. Committee members found a summary of national research in the following needs statement:

The accelerated trend over the past decade toward empowering our nation's young people to succeed has fostered a new awareness and commitment to this most valuable resource. Unfortunately, the money required to support this commitment and realize change has not kept up the pace. Our youth cannot truly be a priority until we back up our good intentions with the funding needed to demonstrate this priority.<sup>vii</sup>

This study went on to conclude that, "Youth development is an investment that must be made by each sector of the wider community—public and private." The authors noted that support for youth development should be sought from federal, state, and local sources, as well as from local business and philanthropic partners.

Committee members noted that Youth Link has been quite successful in securing City funding, and in maintaining in-kind support from the Bellevue School District. In addition, the Youth Link projects that have been spun off to community organizations have often been successful at

attracting other sources of funding. However, Youth Link itself has never before sought to develop financial partnerships with business or philanthropic partners.

### **PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE: 2012 PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH LINK**

Members of the Partnerships Committee devoted careful attention to the possibility of attracting support from local business and philanthropic partners.

From August through October 2011, the Partnerships Committee contacted more than 50 Bellevue businesses and corporations to gauge their initial interest in financial support for youth leadership in the City. Ten businesses expressed interest. Based on those findings, the Partnerships Committee created their **2012 Partnership Campaign for Youth Link**.

Committee members developed a partnership plan, which included several levels of proposed partnership levels in which business could contribute and support Youth Link. These included the following designations:

**Visionary Leader (\$7,500-\$10,000):** These donors would be recognized as “Title Sponsor” of Youth Link’s Annual Community Leadership Awards (YL’s premiere event) and:

- Title Sponsor at Youth Link’s Youth Involvement Conference;
- Invitation to YL’s Gumbo Night with City Council;
- Recognition in all Youth Link printed and website materials;
- Logo recognition and link on YouthLink.com; and
- Recognition at all Youth Link City Council and School Board presentations.

**Gold Partner (\$5,000-\$7,500):** Gold Partners would be recognized as “Selected” Program Title Sponsor and:

- Recognition at Youth Link’s Annual Community Leadership Awards;
- Recognition at Youth Link’s Youth Involvement Conference;
- Recognition in all Youth Link printed and website materials;
- Logo recognition and link on YouthLink.com; and
- Recognition at all Youth Link City Council and School Board presentations.

**Silver Patron (\$2,500-\$5,000):** Silver Patrons would receive plaque recognition from Bellevue City Council and:

- Recognition at Youth Link’s Annual Community Leadership Awards
- Recognition in all Youth Link printed and website materials
- Logo recognition and link on YouthLink.com
- Recognition at all Youth Link City Council and School Board presentations

**Bronze Supporter (\$500-\$2,500):** Bronze Supporters would receive plaque recognition from Bellevue City Council and:

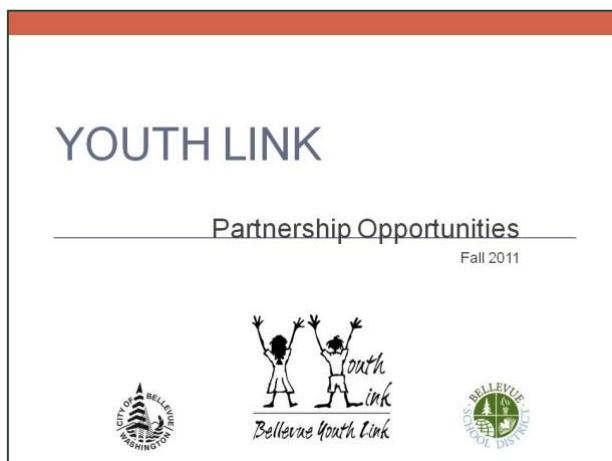
- Recognition at Youth Link’s Annual Community Leadership Awards;
- Recognition in all Youth Link printed and website materials;
- Logo recognition and link on YouthLink.com; and

- Recognition at all Youth Link City Council and School Board presentations.

**Honorable Mention (\$500):** Honorable Mention donors would receive recognition from the Bellevue City Council and:

- Recognition at Youth Link's Annual Community Leadership Awards;
- Recognition at the Youth Involvement Conference; and
- Recognition in all Youth Link printed and website materials.

The committee developed a presentation focused around the Youth Link Partnership Campaign to share with the identified businesses. The presentation introduced Youth Link and its value to the community and summarized the partnership opportunities and potential giving designations.



In November, 35 youth and adults were trained to give this presentation. From this group, teams of three (one adult and two youth) were assigned to each of the nine businesses that had expressed interest in Youth Link. The nine businesses were contacted for partnership presentations, which were scheduled in early winter.

Malia Radford of Radford Realtors spearheaded the Partnership Campaign on behalf of Youth Link, serving as the conduit

between Youth Link and the business community. The identified companies include: Vander Hoek Corporation, Columbia Bank, Microsoft Store, Coco-Cola, KING 5 TV, John Howie Steakhouse, Red Robin, KOMO 4 TV, Mod Pizza, and Key Bank.

As of this writing, the committee has approached seven corporations. Three presentations have been completed; two businesses have deferred partnerships until later, and two more presentations are being scheduled. So far, the committee has met with great interest but received no firm commitments.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOVERNANCE: ENHANCED YOUTH LEADERSHIP MODEL

The Board, after reviewing the strengths and challenges of Youth Link, recommends an “enhanced” Youth Leadership model that transitions the current Youth Link Board to an eight-person youth leadership board (four youth and four adults, two-year terms of office) and maintains the current Bellevue Youth Council.

Responsibilities of the Youth Leadership Board would include:

- Continue to serve as the official “youth voice” for the community;
- Establish and provide oversight for a structured youth leadership curriculum to serve as a revenue generating program; and
- Assume a proactive role in community initiatives, such as Eastside Pathways, Nourishing Network, and other related youth issues.

Responsibilities of the Youth Council would include:

- Host the Youth Involvement Conference (every two years);
- Host the Annual Community Leadership Awards; and
- Implement Action Teams. Current Action Teams include:
  - **Communications**, which focuses on marketing, Bellevue Patch “*Youth Connect*” column, YouthLink.com, Facebook Youth Link Alumni Group, etc.
  - **Special Events**, which includes the Youth Involvement Conference Planning Committee and Community Leadership Awards Planning Committee.
  - **Social Services**, which includes teens working on the Teen Closet Clothing Bank, Bellevue Youth Court, and Kids Care Coat Drive Project.
  - **Arts Education**, which focuses on the Youth Link Arts Project.

These recommendations are linked to the Council’s criteria:

- **Foster a youth-driven approach.** The proposed structure should allow a youth-driven agenda, youth-driven implementation of projects, and youth empowerment to create changes.
- **Give youth a voice.** Elected officials should create an environment that respects youth perspective.

- **Reflect current youth needs.** Governance models should be evaluated based on how well they can respond to the community's perception of youth needs and the youth voice on youth needs (what youth say they want), that affect the needs of Bellevue youth.
- **Serve the larger community.** The selected model should allow Youth Link to serve the broader community, beyond youth.
- **Represent all youth, including Bellevue's diversity.** The selected organizational structure should ensure that Youth Link is open to all youth and includes mechanisms to encourage greater youth involvement, especially from underserved youth in middle and high school, including public schools, private schools, and home schools.
- **Provide leadership skills.** Empower youth to initiate, implement, and take action. Youth Link's recommended structure should provide opportunities for youth to gain leadership skills.
- **Provide mentor relationships.** Youth leadership would include a strong working relationship between youth and the three central elements of the city: business, community, and government.
- **Secure sustained funding.** Funding for youth leadership development in a consistent manner and in amounts substantial enough to support a long-term youth leadership program.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARTNERSHIPS: SHARED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY MODEL**

According to a report on youth engagement prepared by The Finance Project,<sup>viii</sup> building a broad base of community support is a key strategy for youth programs to ensure sustainability. The report suggests that broad base of support can lead to a robust and diversified base of funding.

As the report notes, “To build the support of a wide range of stakeholders in their communities, program leaders and staff have reached out and established partnerships with schools, local government agencies, national and local youth-serving organizations, and colleges and universities.”

The Youth Link Board built on this notion of shared and broad-based community support for youth by developing a funding model for Youth Link. The Board calls the model the **Shared Fiscal Responsibility (SFR) Model** to demonstrate its commitment to raise funds from a wide array of public and private sources, and to link fundraising with community support to ensure that Youth Link builds a diverse and sustainable funding plan.

As the chart below shows, the SFR Model builds from a steady base of City support, with a public/private fundraising effort that is planned to grow over time to support Youth Link activities and programs.



The SFR Model reflects a community's fiscal response to providing youth leadership development in Bellevue. When asked who is primarily responsible for providing youth leadership in Bellevue, 45.2% of the survey respondents listed the City of Bellevue as "high responsible," while 49% and 41% listed, respectively, community groups and then schools as "somewhat responsible."

These results, combined with the comparison study of national and regional youth leadership programs and the National League of Cities' AYCE findings led the Youth Link Committee to develop the SFR Model shown above. The SFR Model demonstrates a sustained funding level in which the City of Bellevue would maintain funding for Youth Link at 2011-2012 budget levels. Increased funding for youth leadership would be secured through a fund development plan.

**Increased Funding.** Youth Link would increase community and school district contribution levels through the following actions. A newly constituted Board would:

1. **Establish and oversee a separate fundraising entity,** consisting of adults with interest and expertise in fund development. The fundraising entity would report to and be overseen by the Youth Leadership Board. The purpose of this entity would be to:
  - Secure funds for the Youth Leadership program through the implementation of the "Shared Fiscal Responsibility" model;

- Implement the Partnership Campaign, which was launched in 2012 and would serve as an annual effort to bring corporations and local businesses to the partnership table;
  - Invite interested youth to sit on the fundraising entity (optional);
  - Engage youth to be a part of the annual Partnership Campaign; and
  - Evaluate fundraising efforts in two years.
2. **Establish a revenue generating, structured youth leadership curriculum** targeting middle and high school students in Bellevue and the Eastside.
  3. **Utilize the partnership with the Bellevue School District** to secure additional funding from the Bellevue Schools Foundation.

These recommendations are linked to the Council's criteria:

- **Reflect community values and goals.** Potential partners should respect and reflect the community's larger values and goals.
- **Connect with youth perspectives.** Potential partners should have a relationship with serving youth and should help Youth Link highlight youth perspectives.
- **Increase Youth Link's name recognition.** Potential partnership opportunities should build on Youth Link's reputation and help increase its name recognition in the community

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARTNERSHIPS: BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Youth Link was first conceived in 1989, as the brainchild of the Mayor of Bellevue, the Bellevue School Board President, and the City Manager. So it is only natural that the Bellevue School District (BSD) has been a significant Youth Link partner since the program's inception. BSD's contributions to Youth Link have been noteworthy:

- A member of the School Board sits on the Youth Link Board
- BSD staff regularly participate in Youth Link events
- BSD coordinates with Youth Link and the City on grant proposals
- Local schools provide time and facilities
- Teachers incorporate Youth Link activities into the classroom
- BSD has established a culture and commitment to student community involvement

To be thorough, members of the Partnerships Committee explored the possibility of seeking additional commitments from BSD. The committee investigated possible monetary and in-kind contributions. At this time, the District is not able to make financial contributions to support Youth Link. However, there is an opportunity to approach the Bellevue Schools Foundation to explore opportunities to partner and collaborate in the future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUNDING**

The Youth Link Board recommends that the City of Bellevue continue to fund youth leadership at the 2011-2012 budget allocation of \$230,000 for the annual operations of Youth Link as Youth Link transitions to a “Shared Fiscal Responsibility” (SFR) Model. The SFR Model demonstrates a sustained funding level in which the City of Bellevue would maintain funding for Youth Link at 2011-2012 budget levels. Increased funding for youth leadership would be secured through a fund development plan that includes an annual Partnership Campaign, foundation grants, and revenue-generating youth leadership programs.

# APPENDIX A: BELLEVUE YOUTH LINK BOARD

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## **YOUTH AND ADULTS IN PARTNERSHIP**

The Youth Link Board was formed in 1991 by the Bellevue City Council to oversee the implementation of Youth Link's Action Agenda and to advise the City Council and the City Manager on youth issues. The Youth Link Board is comprised of six youths and six adults appointed by the City Manager. The Board convenes monthly at City Hall.

From 1991-2010, the Youth Link Board was authorized by the City to award funds for community youth projects and reports regularly to the Bellevue City Council. Since

1991, Youth Link Board has disbursed over \$1 million to award-winning youth projects. Many of these projects have been replicated throughout the nation. Youth projects include the Ground Zero Teen Center, Bellevue Skate Park, Bellevue Youth Court, Teen Closet, Youth Connection Newspaper, Youth Involvement Conference, Youth Link Community Leadership Awards (CLA), Climbing Walls, Challenge Courses, and many others.

The Youth Link Board provides a platform for adults from the Bellevue community to serve as positive role-models for teens. It also fosters caring adult-teen relationships. The Youth Link Board gives teens an opportunity to learn about policy and decision-making processes and to understand how adults process and prioritize information. It also provides adults the opportunity to learn from teens and to understand their thought processes and priorities.

A list of Youth Link Board and Committee members can be found on the next page.

## BELLEVUE YOUTH LINK BOARD 2010-2011

### Adults

Juan Esparza  
Olivia Gonzalez  
Faisal Jaswal  
Katie Kappel  
Michelle Mattson-Hamilton, Adult Co-Chair  
Caroline Thienes  
Lt. David Sellers, Bellevue Police

### Youth

Nina Chen  
Ryley Martin, Youth Co-Chair  
Kuba Jeffers  
Andrew Kranseler  
Jenny Kim, Youth Co-Chair  
Alice Zhang

### Ex-officio

Mayor Don Davidson – Bellevue City Council  
Michael Murphy – Bellevue School Board

## YOUTH LINK COMMITTEE 2011-2012

### Adults

Michelle Mattson-Hamilton, Co-Chair  
Mike Murphy, Co-Chair  
Chris Marks  
Malia Radford  
Sherry Grindeland  
Juan Esparza  
Olivia Gonzalez  
Caroline Thienes

### Youth

Jason Lam  
Francis Yuen  
Lucinda Lu  
Jenny Kim, Co-Chair  
Ryley Martin, Co-Chair  
Julia Liu  
Emily Jiang

## STAFF

Patrick Foran, Director, Parks & Community Services  
Terry Smith, Assistant Director, Parks & Community Services  
Helena Stephens, Teen Services Manager, Parks & Community Services  
Patrick Alina, Youth Link Coordinator, Parks & Community Services

### Report prepared by:

Mary Bourguignon, Steeple-jack Consulting

### Acknowledgements

Gregg Williamson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State  
Kyla Lackie, SOAR, King County  
Camron Parker, City of Bellevue – Parks & Community Services  
James McClain, City of Bellevue – Parks & Community Services

# APPENDIX B: YOUTH LINK SURVEY

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Youth Link developed a survey, which was administered both electronically and on paper during fall 2012. Survey questions and results are listed below.

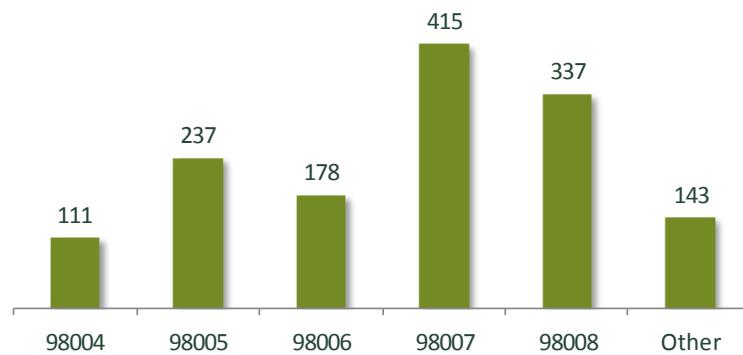
## **Youth Link wants to know what you think and only your help will do!**

*Youth Link is a youth leadership organization in Bellevue. In order to best serve you, we need to stay relevant to what matters to you. The questions in this survey are designed to help us understand the most pressing issues teens are facing and what services and activities teens need that are not currently available. Please use the next 10 minutes thoughtfully. Your answers will directly impact the services our organization provides in the future. Your opinion matters! Thank you! Youth Link Board*

### **1. What is the zip code where you live?**

Zip Code	Percent	Count
98004	7.8%	111
98005	16.7%	237
98006	12.5%	178
<b>98007</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>415</b>
98008	23.7%	337
98027	1.0%	14
98033	0.8%	12
98039	0.8%	11
98052	4.2%	60
98056	1.5%	22
98059	1.7%	24
Other		86
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,421</b>

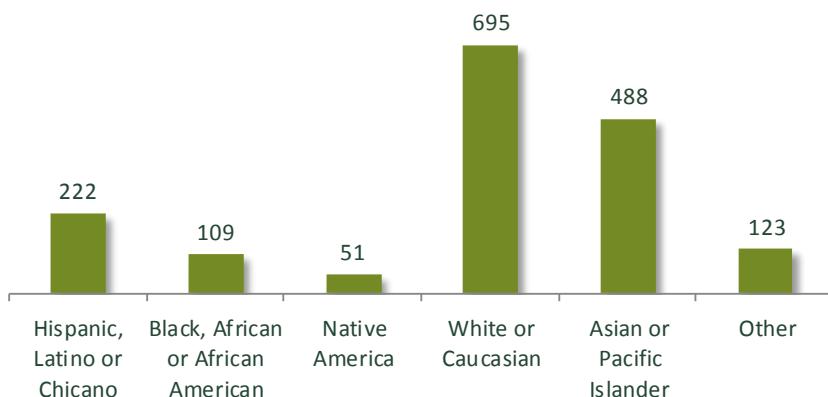
## Location of Respondents



## 2. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? Check all that apply.

Race or Ethnicity	Percent	Count
Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano	15.1%	222
Black, African, or African-American	7.4%	109
Native American	3.5%	51
<b>White or Caucasian</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>695</b>
Asian or Pacific Islander	33.2%	488
Other	8.4%	123
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,469</b>

## Race of Respondents



**3. Please select your age range.**

Age Range	Percent	Count
<b>11-16</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>989</b>
17-21	22.7%	335
22-30	2.0%	30
31-40	2.3%	34
41-50	2.7%	40
51-60	1.8%	27
61 or older	1.6%	24
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,479</b>

**Questions for persons 11-21:**

**4. In what grade are you at school?**

Grade	Percent	Count
I am not enrolled	1.3%	17
6th	9.0%	120
7th	13.9%	185
8th	9.7%	130
9th	15.7%	210
10th	17.1%	228
11th	13.6%	182
<b>12th</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>231</b>
College first year	0.9%	12
College second year	0.4%	6
College third year	0.1%	2
College fourth year	0.2%	3
Post graduate	0.7%	9
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,335</b>

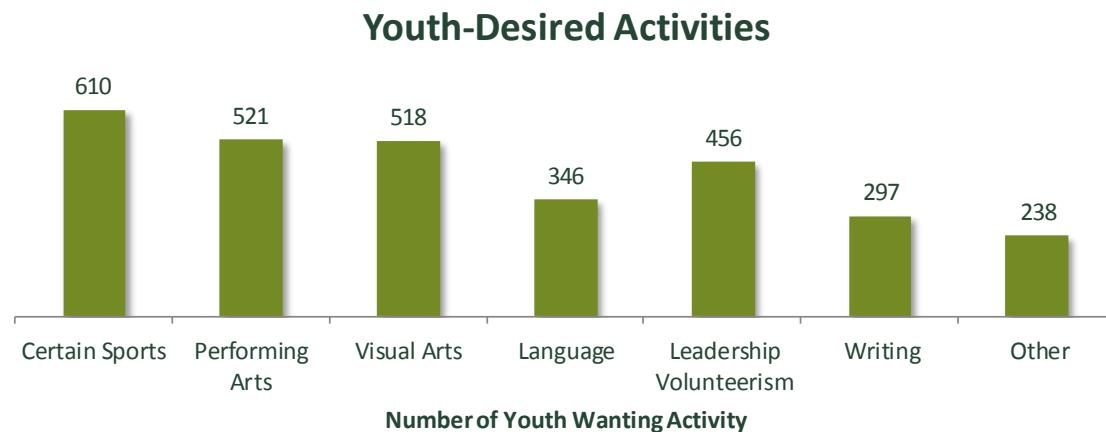
**5. What school do you attend?**

Variety of answers received. Respondents attend public, private, and home school.

**6. What activities for youth would you take part in if they were provided more often at school or in the community? (check all that apply)**

Activity	Percent	Count
Certain sports	42.1%	610
Performing arts	35.9%	521
Visual arts	35.7%	518
Language	23.9%	346
Leadership/Volunteerism	31.4%	456
Writing	20.5%	297
Other	16.4%	238
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,450</b>

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.



**7. You marked that certain <sports/performing arts/etc.> were not available as much as you would like at school or in the community. Which opportunities are not available?**

Variety of answers.

**8. In your opinion, how important is it for youth to be actively involved in the community? *Scale of 1-4***

Answer	Percent	Count
1 Not important	3.4%	48
2 Low importance	6.9%	96
<b>3 Somewhat important</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>658</b>
4 Very important	42.8%	599
<b>Rating Average</b>		<b>3.29</b>
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,401</b>

**9. To what degree do you believe that youth are involved (or engaged) in the community today? *Scale of 1-4***

Answer	Percent	Count
Don't know	13.3%	187
Deliberately uninvolved	6.1%	86
Relatively uninvolved	35.4%	496
<b>Moderately involved</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>532</b>
Actively involved	7.1%	100
<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>3.19</b>	
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,401</b>

**10. In your opinion, who is primarily responsible for providing youth leadership programs in Bellevue? *Scale of 1-4***

Organization	Not Responsible	Low Responsibility	Somewhat Responsible	High Responsibility	Rating Avg	Count
City of Bellevue	5.2%	69	10.9%	144	38.7%	513
Schools	7.1%	95	14.4%	192	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>546</b>
Faith Communities	17.6%	230	27.1%	354	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>525</b>
Private Businesses	24.9%	327	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>448</b>	29.8%	392
Community Groups	6.2%	82	13.8%	183	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>647</b>
Other						48
<b>Answered Question</b>						<b>1,368</b>

**11. What skills are important to learn as elements of a youth leadership program? Scale of 1-4**

Skill	Not Important	Low Importance		Somewhat Important		Very Important		Rating Avg	Count
Running a meeting	4.8%	63	16.6%	220	<b>43.9%</b>	<b>582</b>	34.8%	461	3.09
Leadership training	3.4%	46	8.3%	111	35.8%	478	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>700</b>	3.37
Planning projects	2.8%	37	8.6%	115	41.4%	551	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>628</b>	3.33
Working with other youth	2.3%	31	5.5%	74	26.6%	357	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>878</b>	3.55
Interacting with leaders	3.7%	49	8.9%	119	37.3%	500	<b>50.2%</b>	<b>673</b>	3.34
Conflict management	3.2%	49	7.9%	105	34.1%	454	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>730</b>	3.41
Other									44
<b>Answered Question</b>									<b>1,368</b>

### Top Desired Skills

Scale of 1 (low priority) to 4 (high priority)

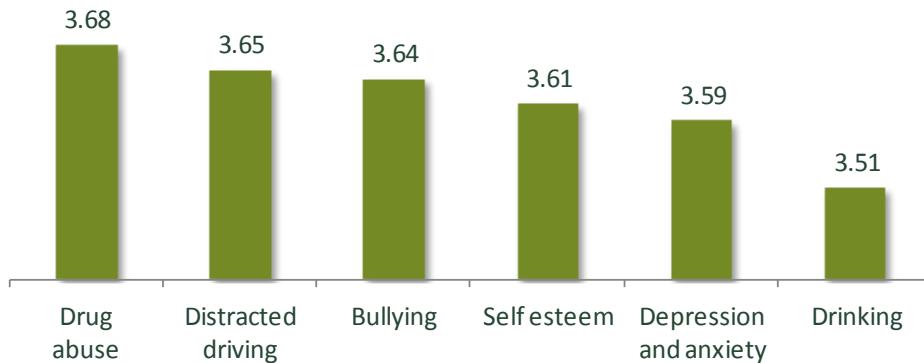


**12. Based on your opinion, please rate to what degree you think each of the items below is a minor or major issue facing youth in our community today. Scale of 1-5**

Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue		Major Issue	Rating Avg	Count
Drug abuse, drug treatment	8.7% (115)	14.2% (188)	17.5% (231)	19.7% (261)	<b>39.9%</b> <b>(528)</b>	3.68 1,323
Homelessness	13.0% (173)	24.7% (329)	20.3% (271)	15.7% (209)	<b>26.3%</b> <b>(351)</b>	3.18 1,333
Domestic and dating violence	14.5% (192)	23.0% (305)	20.5% (272)	16.3% (216)	<b>25.7%</b> <b>(341)</b>	3.16 1,326
Sex education and personal health	16.3% (218)	20.7% (276)	22.3% (298)	18.0% (240)	<b>22.6%</b> <b>(302)</b>	3.10 1,334
Improving relationships with parents	10.8% (144)	14.3% (190)	21.6% (288)	25.3% (337)	<b>28.1%</b> <b>(374)</b>	3.46 1,333
Bullying (in life and cyber)	7.9% (105)	15.1% (201)	18.6% (248)	21.7% (288)	<b>36.7%</b> <b>(488)</b>	3.64 1,330
Discrimination	10.7% (142)	21.6% (286)	18.7% (248)	17.5% (232)	<b>31.4%</b> <b>(415)</b>	3.37 1,323
Nutrition, healthy eating habits	8.6% (114)	17.5% (231)	20.9% (276)	21.5% (285)	<b>31.5%</b> <b>(417)</b>	3.50 1,323
Underage drinking	11.7% (156)	15.8% (211)	17.3% (231)	19.8% (264)	<b>35.4%</b> <b>(472)</b>	3.51 1,334
Eating disorders	13.5% (180)	22.2% (296)	<b>23.0%</b> <b>(307)</b>	18.5% (247)	22.7% (303)	3.15 1,333
Teen pregnancy	14.5% (193)	24.2% (322)	18.0% (240)	17.1% (227)	<b>26.2%</b> <b>(348)</b>	3.16 1,330
Teen jobs	13.6% (181)	21.5% (287)	<b>23.0%</b> <b>(307)</b>	20.1% (268)	21.9% (292)	3.15 1,335
Self-esteem	8.5% (113)	15.1% (202)	19.0% (254)	21.9% (293)	<b>35.5%</b> <b>(474)</b>	3.61 1,336
Depression and anxiety	7.8% (103)	15.9% (211)	20.1% (266)	22.0% (292)	<b>34.2%</b> <b>(453)</b>	3.59 1,325
Driving while distracted	9.1% (121)	14.1% (188)	17.4% (231)	21.6% (287)	<b>37.9%</b> <b>(504)</b>	3.65 1,331
Job training	14.7% (196)	21.5% (286)	<b>21.8%</b> <b>(291)</b>	20.4% (272)	21.5% (287)	3.13 1,332
Volunteer opportunities	17.8% (236)	<b>25.6%</b> <b>(340)</b>	22.8% (303)	16.1% (214)	17.6% (234)	2.90 1,327
Leadership training	16.6% (220)	24.0% (318)	<b>24.3%</b> <b>(322)</b>	18.0% (238)	17.1% (227)	2.95 1,325
<b>Answered Question</b>					<b>1,368</b>	

## Top Issues Facing Youth Today

Scale of 1 (low priority) to 5 (high priority)



**13. Are there any other issues you would like to include that are not listed above?**

Variety of answers.

Continued on next page

**14. Have you ever participated or heard about the following? Check the appropriate box for each**

Activity or Organization	Yes, participated		Not participated, but heard of		Neither participated nor heard of	Count
Ground Breakers Mentorship Program	4.6%	59	26.5%	338	<b>68.8%</b>	<b>877</b> 1,274
AVID (Avoidance Via Individual Determination)	16.8%	215	<b>46.5%</b>	<b>597</b>	36.7%	471 1,283
Bellevue's 24-Hour Relay	10.3%	131	32.8%	417	<b>56.9%</b>	<b>723</b> 1,271
Youth Involvement Conference	4.9%	63	20.7%	264	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>947</b> 1,274
Community Leadership Awards	6.7%	85	28.3%	360	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>828</b> 1,273
Bellevue Youth Court	6.0%	76	30.2%	383	<b>63.8%</b>	<b>810</b> 1,269
Bellevue Youth Council	6.9%	88	39.9%	509	<b>53.2%</b>	<b>680</b> 1,277
Bellevue Skate Parks	20.8%	267	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>569</b>	34.8%	447 1,283
Crossroads Thanksgiving or Winter Holiday Dinner	7.6%	96	32.9%	418	<b>59.6%</b>	<b>757</b> 1,271
Ground Zero Teen Center	17.9%	228	34.4%	439	<b>47.7%</b>	<b>609</b> 1,276
Gumbo Night	5.0%	63	15.3%	194	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>1,013</b> 1,270
Kids Care Coat Drive	14.9%	190	32.0%	409	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>678</b> 1,277
Outspoken/ Youth Connection Teen Newspaper	3.5%	45	20.1%	256	<b>76.4%</b>	<b>974</b> 1,275
SOAR Multi-Cultural Leadership Training	3.1%	40	16.7%	212	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>1,018</b> 1,270
South Bellevue Community Center Challenge Course	8.3%	106	24.0%	306	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>861</b> 1,273
Teen Closet	6.3%	80	19.9%	253	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>936</b> 1,269
TRACKS Outdoor Recreation	5.9%	75	22.1%	281	<b>72.0%</b>	<b>916</b> 1,272
Trick or Treat for Cans Annual Food Drive	13.4%	171	27.3%	348	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>754</b> 1,273
Youth Leadership Academy	5.2%	66	24.1%	306	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>899</b> 1,271
Youth Link Board	4.6%	59	301.%	382	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>830</b> 1,271
Crossroads Community Center's Middle School Dances	18.5%	236	32.6%	417	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>625</b> 1,278
Youthlink.com web page	7.5%	95	29.4%	374	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>804</b> 1,273
<b>Answered Question</b>						<b>1,305</b>

**15. If you have heard of Youth Link, but not participated in the program, why? *Check all that apply:***

Answer	Percent	Count
Too busy	44.5%	358
Lack of transportation	11.8%	95
<b>Not interested</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>381</b>
Didn't know who could participate	32.8%	264
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>805</b>

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

**16. What would be the most effective way for you to hear about Bellevue Youth Link and Youth Link events? *Check all that apply:***

Type of Communication	Percent	Count
Phone	19.8%	238
Text	27.8%	335
Facebook	50.3%	606
<b>School announcements</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>636</b>
YouthLink.com web site	17.2%	207
YouTube	21.2%	255
Twitter	10.5%	127
Email	36.5%	440
Paper fliers	28.1%	338
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>1,204</b>

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

# APPENDIX C: PROGRAM RESEARCH

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Youth Link researched 31 youth development programs around the country to compare governance structures, operating philosophies, and programs with Youth Link's.

PROGRAM NAME	Location Youth Served	STATUS		
		Gov't	Non-profit	For Profit
Youth Leadership Foundation - DC	Washington DC		✓	
National Youth Leadership Forum	Vienna, VA		✓	
Youth Leadership Foundation - Kansas	Manhattan, KS		✓	
Bounce Back Youth Leadership Foundation	Mobile, AL		✓	
Summer Search	National		✓	
The Freechild Project	Olympia, WA			✓
HOBY	National		✓	
LeadAmerica	National		✓	
African American Youth Leadership Program	California		✓	
Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project	Sacramento, CA		✓	
Berkshire Leadership Program	Berkshire, NY		✓	
Youth Lead	Sharon, MA		✓	
Youth Leadership Northwood University	Midland, MI		✓	
National Youth Leadership Council	St. Paul, MN		✓	
Youth Leadership Institute	California		✓	
Key Club	National		✓	
GirlsAspire	National		✓	
Leadership Greater Washington	Washington DC		✓	
Youth Leadership Development Institute	Columbia, SC		✓	
Northland Foundation	Minnesota		✓	
Center for Creative Leadership	National			✓
Youth Leadership Montgomery	Rockville, MD		✓	
Chase Youth Commission	Spokane, WA		✓	
Clark County Youth Commission	Clark County, WA	✓		
Everett Mayor's Youth Council	Everett, WA	✓		
Issaquah Youth Advisory Board	Issaquah, WA	✓		
Kirkland Youth Council	Kirkland, WA	✓		
Lakewood Youth Council	Lakewood, WA	✓		
Seattle Youth Commission	Seattle, WA	✓		
Youth Philanthropy Council	Vancouver, BC			✓
Redmond Youth Partnership Advisory Committee	Redmond, WA	✓		

## Youth Program Comparisons

✓ = yes, ~ = not completely, ✗ = no

PROGRAM NAME	Based on community's perception of youth needs	Based on youth's perception of youth needs	Represents a diverse group of youth	Empowers youth to initiate and implement
<b>YOUTH LINK</b>	✓	✓	~	✓
Youth Leadership Foundation - DC	✓	~	✓	~
National Youth Leadership Forum	✓	✗	~	✗
Youth Leadership Foundation - Kansas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bounce Back Youth Leadership Foundation	✓	✗	~	✗
Summer Search	✓	~	✓	✓
The Freechild Project	✓	✓	✓	✓
HOBY	✓	✓	✓	✓
LeadAmerica	✓	✗	✓	✗
African American Youth Leadership Program	✓	✓	✗	~
Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project	✓	✓	✗	✓
Berkshire Leadership Program	✓	✓	✓	~
Youth Lead	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Northwood University	✓	✗	✗	~
National Youth Leadership Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Institute	✓	✓	✓	~
Key Club	✓	✓	✓	✓
GirlsAspire	✓	~	✗	~
Leadership Greater Washington	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Development Institute	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northland Foundation	✓	✗	✓	✓
Center for Creative Leadership	✓	✗	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Montgomery	✓	✓	✓	~
Chase Youth Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clark County Youth Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓
Everett Mayor's Youth Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issaquah Youth Advisory Board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kirkland Youth Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lakewood Youth Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seattle Youth Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth Philanthropy Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Redmond Youth Partnership Advisory Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Youth Program Comparisons (cont)

✓ = yes, ~ = not completely, ✗ = no

PROGRAM NAME	Working relationship: youth and businesses	Working relationship: youth and community groups	Working relationship: youth and local government	Elected officials create environment that respects youth perspectives
<b>YOUTH LINK</b>	✗	~	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Foundation - DC	✗	✗	✗	✗
National Youth Leadership Forum	✓	~	✗	✗
Youth Leadership Foundation - Kansas	✓	✓	✓	~
Bounce Back Youth Leadership Foundation	✗	✗	✗	✗
Summer Search	✓	✓	✓	✗
The Freechild Project	✓	✓	✓	✗
HOBY	✓	✓	✗	✗
LeadAmerica	✗	✗	✗	✗
African American Youth Leadership Program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project	✓	✓	✓	✓
Berkshire Leadership Program	✓	✓	✗	✗
Youth Lead	✗	✓	✗	✗
Youth Leadership Northwood University	~	~	~	✗
National Youth Leadership Council	✓	✓	~	~
Youth Leadership Institute	~	✓	~	✗
Key Club	✓	✓	✗	✗
GirlsAspire	✓	~	✗	✗
Leadership Greater Washington	✓	✓	✓	~
Youth Leadership Development Institute	✓	~	~	✓
Northland Foundation	~	✓	✗	✗
Center for Creative Leadership	✓	✓	✓	~
Youth Leadership Montgomery	~	✓	✓	✓
Chase Youth Commission	~	✓	✓	✓
Clark County Youth Commission	~	✓	✓	✓
Everett Mayor's Youth Council	~	✓	✓	✓
Issaquah Youth Advisory Board	~	✓	✓	✓
Kirkland Youth Council	~	✓	✓	✓
Lakewood Youth Council	~	✓	✓	✓
Seattle Youth Commission	~	✓	✓	✓
Youth Philanthropy Council	✓	✓	~	~
Redmond Youth Partnership Advisory Committee	~	✓	✓	✓

## Youth Program Comparisons (cont)

✓ = yes, ~ = not completely, ✗ = no

PROGRAM NAME	Formal leadership curriculum (classroom training)	Practical leadership training	Sustainable funding plan	Shared financial responsibility from government, community, businesses
<b>YOUTH LINK</b>	~	✓	✗	✗
Youth Leadership Foundation - DC	✓	~	✓	✓
National Youth Leadership Forum	✓	~	✓	✗
Youth Leadership Foundation - Kansas	✓	~	✓	✓
Bounce Back Youth Leadership Foundation	~	~	~	~
Summer Search	✓	✓	✓	✗
The Freechild Project	✓	✓	✓	✗
HOBY	✓	✓	✓	✓
LeadAmerica	✓	~	✓	✗
African American Youth Leadership Program	✓	✓	✓	~
Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project	✓	✓	✓	✗
Berkshire Leadership Program	✓	~	✓	~
Youth Lead	✓	✓	✓	✗
Youth Leadership Northwood University	✓	✗	✓	✗
National Youth Leadership Council	✓	✓	✓	✗
Youth Leadership Institute	✓	✓	✓	✗
Key Club	✓	✓	✓	✓
GirlsAspire	✓	~	✓	✓
Leadership Greater Washington	✓	~	✓	✓
Youth Leadership Development Institute	✓	✓	✓	✗
Northland Foundation	✓	~	✗	✗
Center for Creative Leadership	✓	✓	✓	✗
Youth Leadership Montgomery	✓	~	~	✗
Chase Youth Commission	✓	✓	~	✗
Clark County Youth Commission	✓	✓	~	✗
Everett Mayor's Youth Council	✓	✓	~	✗
Issaquah Youth Advisory Board	✓	✓	✓	✗
Kirkland Youth Council	✓	✓	~	✗
Lakewood Youth Council	✓	✓	~	✗
Seattle Youth Commission	✓	✓	~	✗
Youth Philanthropy Council	~	✓	✓	✗
Redmond Youth Partnership Advisory Committee	✓	✓	~	✗

## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> Clegg and Associates, *Bellevue Youth Link Background Information*, January 1990.

<sup>ii</sup> NLC Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, *Promoting Youth Participation*, Issue #3 Action Kit for Municipal Leaders, 2002.

<sup>iii</sup> Clegg and Associates, *Bellevue Youth Link Evaluation*, January 2000.

<sup>iv</sup> National League of Cities Youth, Institute for Youth, Education & Families, *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders*, Washington, D.C., 2010.

<sup>v</sup> Gray, Aracelis and Cheryl D. Hayes, *Understanding the State of Knowledge of Youth Engagement Financing and Sustainability*, The Finance Project, Washington DC, 2008.

<sup>vi</sup> National League of Cities Youth, Institute for Youth, Education & Families, *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders*, Washington, D.C., 2010.

<sup>vii</sup> Newman, Robert P., Stephanie M. Smith, Richard Murphy, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development, *A Matter of Money: The Cost and Financing of Youth Development*, in the document *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions*, a publication of Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia.

<sup>viii</sup> Gray, Aracelis and Cheryl D. Hayes, *Understanding the State of Knowledge of Youth Engagement Financing and Sustainability*, The Finance Project, Washington DC, 2008.