

# YAKETY YAC NEWS

Winston-Salem Youth Advisory Council

## YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ATTENDS NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE



**YAC members with NLC President Victoria Woods, Mayor of Tacoma Washington, in General Session, and Youth Delegate workshops**

Each year, the National League of Cities welcomes young leaders from across the country to their City Summit. Our youth council members engaged with youth leaders from other councils, experienced insightful and meaningful workshops, and heard from international changemakers.

Workshops attended included, Best Practicing Sharing, Leaning into Red Tape and Social Media Outreach for Youth Councils. Other highlights included keynote speeches by Hakeem Oluseyi – African American astrophysicist, educator and inventor, Laxman Narasimhan – CEO of Starbucks Coffee Company and Jose Andres – Humanitarian and Founder of the World Central Kitchen. They also met leaders and elected officials from across the nation.

The week was packed with activities and opportunities to learn and connect with each other and their peers. Seven members of the Youth Advisory Council, Ghufuran Abd, Robin Angat, Ava Banner, Cristofer Gallardo, David Lovette, Jayla Page-Thomas, and Madysun Williams attended, and were accompanied by two chaperones, Erika Simon and Dr. Pam Peoples Joyner who are Winston-Salem City Employees.

## YAC Brings Awareness to Youth Homelessness by Max Chen, Atkins High School

Every year, dance teams, high school marching bands, and various other community members come together to put on a 2-hour parade of non-stop holiday cheer, culminating in the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. On December 2, 2022, members Jada Taylor, Max Chen, Masha Efremov, Robin Angat, and Cristofer Gallardo-Acevedo of Winston-Salem's Youth Advisory Council participated in the annual Winston-Salem Holiday Parade.

The Youth Advisory Council participates in the parade to bring awareness to homelessness in our community, especially homelessness of the youth. Armed with a brand new banner, posters, and their voices, the Youth Advisory Council gave those in need a voice as they marched in the parade. We understand that these are deep-rooted issues that are incredibly difficult to fix, but every successful solution starts somewhere, and raising awareness is the best way for us to make an impact. The Youth Advisory Council exists to advocate for the youth, and will always do its utmost to represent and give a voice to all of the people it represents.

## STUDENT RACE RELATIONS: Are we there yet?



**Students on the Race Relations Forum Panel**

On Thursday, September 28, 2024, students from high schools across the county came together at Parkland Magnet High School to discuss the state of race relations amongst their peers, in the yearly event, "Changing Voices of Diversity High School Race Relations Forum sponsored by the city of Winston-Salem's Human Relations Commission and the Human Relations/Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department. 14 students representing nearly all the schools in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools System participated in this event.

Guests were welcomed by Dr. Ronnie Christian, Assistant Director of the Human Relations/DEI department and Dr. Fabby Williams, Deputy Superintendent of Schools. Members of the Youth Advisory Council served as panel moderators and asked questions that were thought provoking and profound. It was concluded that while there are still some challenges, the students were on the right track by willing to have open and honest dialogue. The evening's event was closed out with remarks from Kerry Wiggins, who is a member of the Human Relations Commission.

**State Youth Council Mini-Grant Conference  
Teaches Crucial Skills  
by: Ava Banner, Reagan High School**

I, Ava Banner, had the spectacular opportunity of attending the State Youth Council's Mini-Grant conference, serving as the Winston-Salem representative and the SYC's Sergeant in Arms.

The purpose of the Mini-Grant conference was to engage in delegation processes revolving around the money allotted to the State Youth Council to disperse to partially funded applicants. Originally being funded 6,292 dollars, the Youth in attendance independently engaged in effective communication, presentation, and debate of the projects received.

In regards to the allocations, we considered:

- How tangible the project is.
- Where the money will be delegated within the project.
- The timeline for the project.
- The details of the project application; How specific it was, what was missing, etc.
- The benefits of the project (if implemented).
- The uniqueness of the project.

The councils were separated into four separate groups: red, yellow, green, and purple. Each group was given three-four proposals to it and apportion up to 500 dollars towards. For each proposal, the group was tasked with creating an articulate exhibition of the project, explaining why the group chose to either fully or partially fund the initiative. After the presentation, other groups had the ability to participate in a "pro" (for the particular assignment of funds) or "con" (against the particular assignment of funds) debate. To finalize, each council came together to vote for the proposed endowment.

The Mini-Grant conference offered ample moments to engage in monetary dispersion procedures with grants and helped to further visualize the process as youth often times are not involved in.

**Yuth Advisory Council Member names to  
2024 Council on Youth Education and Families**



Ava Banner, Chair of the Youth Advisory Council has been chosen as one of the four Youth Representatives to serve on the 2024 Council on Youth, Education and Families. An initiative of the National League of Cities – an organization comprised of city, town and village leaders that are focused on improving the quality of life for their residents – the goal of the YEF is to guide, support and

promote best practices that address the needs of children, youth, and families. The members of this council include local elected officials, youth who serve on municipal boards or commissions and representatives from major national organizations concerned about children and families, a fact that sets this council apart from all other NLC committee or council.

Appointed by the National League of Cities President, the rigorous application process is open to high school sophomores and juniors who serve on a city's youth council, commission or advisory board and the terms are for 12 months. A strong voice for unrepresented youth, Ava is no stranger to advocacy. At the 2023 NLC Congressional Summit, Ava was elected as the first mayor of the Youth Delegate Summit. She has been a member of the Youth Advisory Council for 3 years and is a junior at Reagan High School.

**2023-2024 Winston-Salem  
Youth Advisory Council**

- Atkins High School* Max Chen
- Early College—Cristofer Gallardo, Athena Perez Perez, Jada Taylor*
- Middle College—Robin Angat, Laila Johnson, Jayla Page-Thomas*
- Mount Tabor High—Madysun Williams*
- North Forsyth High—Nicolas Spencer*
- Parkland High School - Ghufuran Abd, David Lovette*
- Reagan High School—Ava Banner, Daniel Reyes*
- West Forsyth High School - Maria Efremov, Mariangel Noriega*

**City Council:**

Mayor Allen Joines; Denise D. Adams, Mayor Pro Tempore, North Ward; Kevin Mundy, Southwest Ward; Robert C. Clark, West Ward; John C. Larson, South Ward; Jeff MacIntosh, Northwest Ward; Barbara Hanes Burke, Northeast Ward; Annette Scippio, East Ward; James Taylor, Jr., Southeast Ward;  
City Manager: Patrick Pate

**Human Relations/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department, Staff YAC Advisors**

Dr. Ronnie Christian, Interim Director  
Erika Simon, Outreach Analyst