

YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

PALO ALTO FAMILY YMCA

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What is Youth & Government?

- The high school portion of this program is called Model Legislature and Court and focuses on California state government. The middle school program is Model UN.
- Conferences
 - Training and Elections I and II occur in Fresno. These are more background and research based with regards to statewide government in California.
 - Sacramento Conference – gives delegates the opportunity to apply what they learned at the first two conferences as the high schoolers truly “take over the capitol”.
- Skills Built
 - Public speaking/debate
 - Research and writing
 - Evidence based persuasion
 - Civic engagement

Why This Program Matters

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

What the Youth Walk Away With

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

Youth Advocacy in Y&G

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

Bill Writing

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



The UC Bill

Abstract

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

- (a) The University of California system will place “University of California”, rather than the name of an individual institution, on graduating students’ diplomas and other official documents.
- (b) Students will not have the option of having the name of their individual institution shown on their diplomas and other official documents.
- (c) Official documents include but are not limited to: transcripts, letter headings, yearly grade reports, and final exam marks.
- (d) Internal records of the university will still bear the full name of the individual institution.

Bill Hearing Night

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



Sacramento

