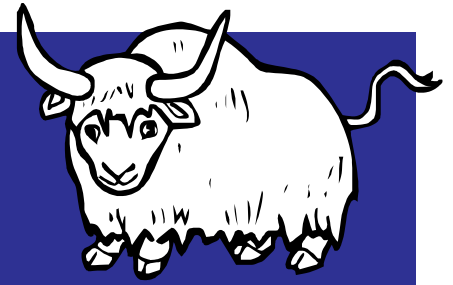




April 2003
Issue 4
League of Oregon Cities Youth Advisory Council

YAC Newsletter



The YAC is Now Recruiting!

Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2003 and sent to the League's offices

-PAGE 2-
Featured Youth
Council:
Beaverton

-PAGE 3-
Youth Perspective:
Dante Vivanco,
LOC YAC Member

Youth Perspective:
Caitlin Brennan,
LOC YAC Member

YAC Project Update

-PAGE 4-
Continued Articles

**Questions?
Comments?
Ideas for
upcoming
issues?**

Please contact
Megan Grill at
(503) 588-6550 or
by e-mail at
mgrill@orcities.org

The League of Oregon Cities Youth Advisory Council is currently recruiting energetic, hardworking youth entering their sophomore, junior or senior year in fall 2003, to serve on the 2003-04 LOC YAC. We need city officials' assistance in spreading the word to youth in their communities about this unique opportunity.

Established in 2000, the League's YAC is a group of 12 high school students representing cities from all over the state. Past projects of the League's YAC have included promoting and strengthening local YACs, educating peers on the issue of harassment in Oregon's schools, providing the youth perspective on what it is like to be a teen in Oregon through the creation of the *YAC Newsletter*, and acting as an informational resource for the League's Board. In the past, YAC members have been strong, active leaders in their respective communities—many of whom serve on local YACs.

The benefits YAC students receive from their service are

tremendous. YAC members have the opportunity to meet with and learn from students all over the state, attend the League's annual conference in November, and meet mayors, council members and city managers from a cross section of Oregon's cities. This is a great opportunity for YAC members to make long lasting connections, receive valuable leadership experience, and represent their peers to local government officials.

Please inform your city's youth leadership of this opportunity and encourage those students to apply who you think would make a great addition to the

League's YAC. The YAC application is available to download at www.orcities.org/league/yac.cfm. **Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2003 to the League's offices** and will be evaluated on the quality of response to essay questions and attendance commitment. Due to the limited number of open positions, the application process is competitive. Applicants will be notified of their status by May 7.

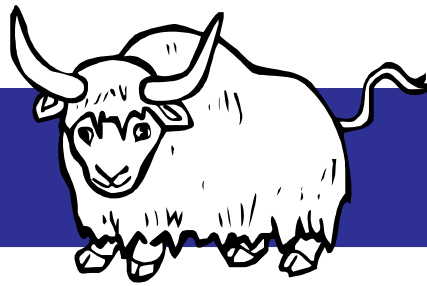
If you have any questions about the application process or the League's YAC, please contact Megan Grill at (503) 588-6550 or by e-mail at mgrill@orcities.org.

**The YAC Newsletter is now
available on the web!**

Current issue and archives are available on
the LOC website at:

**[www.orcities.org/publications/
newsletters.cfm](http://www.orcities.org/publications/newsletters.cfm)**

Download the newsletter and make copies for
all YAC members.



Oregon Youth Advisory Councils

Featured Council: Beaverton

**Beaverton Mayor's
Youth Advisory Board**

- The MYAB consists of 24 youth members. Members are appointed for two-year terms.
- The MYAB will host a Youth Summit titled "Taking Control" on April 19, 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM. Issues to be discussed at the summit include the stereotypes, perceptions, and pressures facing today's youth.

The Beaverton Mayor's Youth Advisory Board (MYAB) was created in 2000 by Mayor Rob Drake and the Beaverton City Council. The MYAB is currently coordinating a youth summit and participating in a SOLV beach clean-up—all in the month of April! MYAB Coordinator Holly Thompson discussed these and many other projects in a recent interview with the *YAC Newsletter*.

• **How does the youth council recruit students?**

HT: The City of Beaverton sends applications to area high schools each spring advertising the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board (MYAB). Students are welcomed to apply and interviews are generally held during the month of May. Most of our members who are not graduating continue with the Board and tend to encourage other students to apply as well.

• **How is the YAC structured?**

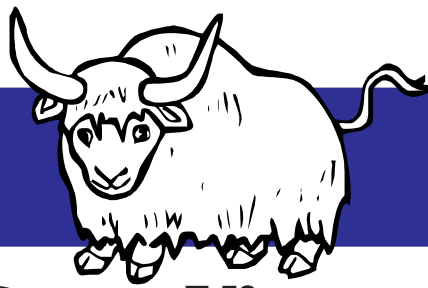
HT: MYAB consists of 24 youth members. Members are appointed for two-year terms. Youth officers for MYAB consist of 2 co-chairs, a vice chair, a secretary and a treasurer. MYAB members meet every other week. They frequently break into smaller sub-committees to tackle various projects. Sub-committees can meet on an as needed basis.

• **What are some projects the Beaverton YAC is currently working on?**

HT: MYAB is currently working on coordinating a Youth Summit on the topic of "Taking Control". The Youth Summit will be held on Saturday, April 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Summit will have three sessions tackling the issues of stereotypes and perceptions, pressures facing youth and our collective future. If you are interested in learning more about the Youth Summit or registering for it, visit the City's Web site or contact the staff liaison number; both are listed at the end of this article.

MYAB is also working on coordinating area youth volunteer time at the Good Neighbor Center. The Good Neighbor Center is dedicated to providing safe emergency housing and support services to empower individuals and families to be self-sufficient. Each school, led by a MYAB member, will be responsible for one night amounting to six evenings of volunteer time by youth. This is projected to equal 120 youth volunteer hours.

MYAB members are also participating in the SOLV beach clean-up in early April. Additional projects for the year include updating the *101 Things To Do in the Greater Beaverton Area*, a resource guide for fun activities (*continued on page 4*)



Youth Perspective: Dante Vivanco, LOC YAC Member

Dante's discussion of harassment relates to the anti-harassment project that the LOC YAC has been working on throughout the year.

The idea of having to deal with harassment for the youth of America isn't a new thing. Practically all kids have dealt with some sort of harassment by the time they graduate from high school. The issue of harassment isn't something that should be placed aside to work on when there is time. It needs to and must be addressed immediately.

Throughout the four years of high school I unfortunately was

able to see first-hand many different people who had to deal with this torment on a daily basis. The constant onslaught that some faced on a day-to-day basis was never worse for anyone then one gentleman that I met my freshman year. This individual would be mocked about his clothes, weight, academic challenges, and basically anything his tormentors could think of. You could watch and listen to him in class and be able to tell that all he wanted was to be accepted, yet there were few that would even acknowledge him by saying hello. There were multiple occasions throughout my four years that I sat down

and conversed with him. On one of these occasions I was actually discussing the issue of harassment and specifically how it had affected him. I found out during that conversation that he had been dealing with this harsh persecution since the sixth grade. He said that after three and a half years of dealing with it he had been strongly considering killing himself. When I asked him what had made him decide not to go through with it, he told me that it was his newfound friends and faith in God. With the support of his friends he was able to overcome everything that he had dealt with in the *(continued on page 4)*

Youth Perspective: Caitlin Brennan, LOC YAC Member

The way I see it, there is a sort of limbo between the age when people have something to say and the day they turn 18 years old—the age that people can vote. I believe that youth under the age of 18 have something of consequence to share, and it is for that reason that I joined a youth advisory board as an active youth interested in government and public policy.

As a freshman in high school, I submitted an application to the Beaverton City Mayor's Youth Advisory Board (MYAB). I joined the board

because I have opinions about my community and believed that I had as much right to speak my peace as any adult. MYAB was my forum, a vehicle for change. I was tired of the teenage stereotypes: youth are lazy, apathetic, reckless and untrustworthy. Since the board's inception three and a half years ago, it has held two Youth Summits and is currently working on its third. These youth summits provide a time and a place for the youth to hear speakers and discuss topics that interest and affect the youth of Beaverton. These

summits are organized and facilitated by MYAB members. It is our mission to be a voice for all the youth in Beaverton. We are committed to community involvement, in hopes of rectifying many of the negative stereotypes adults hold towards the youth. Too often the media and our society focus on the graffiti problem rather than pay the appropriate attention to the mural painted in its place.

Through my participation on the MYAB, I was invited by the Washington County Commission *(continued on page 4)*

Grants available to student leaders

YouthActionNet Award

YouthActionNet is now accepting applications for mini-grants of \$500 for youth oriented projects designed and implemented by student leaders.

Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 may apply individually or in a group for funding to support youth-led projects that promote social change and connections with the local community.

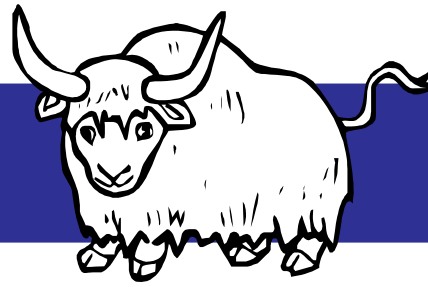
**There are two award deadlines in 2003:
April 18 and October 1.**

For more information, visit:

www.youthactionnet.org/minigrants.php

Contact :
YouthActionNet.org
32 South St., Ste. 500
Baltimore, MD 21202

info@youthactionnet.org



(Beaverton MYAB, continued from page 2) and places for area youth to check out. Three MYAB members will have attended the National League of Cities Conference in Washington D.C. by the time you are reading this. The students will have the opportunity to meet with members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation and listen to local leaders from around the country discuss important issues facing our nation.

Completed projects for MYAB this year include sponsoring two families this past holiday season as well as recommending the City adopt a Proclamation in support of the National Education Association's Read Across America program.

• **What is MYAB's role in the community? How does it interact with local government?**

HT: Mayor Rob Drake attends every MYAB meeting and has taken a strong personal interest in helping MYAB achieve their goals as a Board. In addition, a City Councilor is appointed each year to serve as a liaison to MYAB and the City Councilor attends each meeting as well. This year the liaison is Councilor Dennis Doyle.

The projects that MYAB has chosen this year are certainly reflective of their role in the community. MYAB is working on projects that demonstrate their commitment to community service and helping those in need. MYAB members are also determined to show that youth are empowered individuals capable of contributing greatly to their community.

• **What are some strategies that you have found enable youth to get their opinions heard (i.e. get adults to listen)?**

HT: I think the most important strategy local governments can adopt to enable youth to get their opinions heard is to give youth the resources and assistance to implement their ideas. Projects like MYAB's Youth Summit put our youth's interests into a public forum. Beaverton's MYAB has benefited from articles in area newspapers about our Board and the event. The Youth Summit is an example of an idea generated by youth and implemented by youth that allows their views, concerns and interests to be aired. The most successful strategies for YACs will always be to provide the resources and guidance to allow our youth to follow through on their ideas.

For more information about the Beaverton MYAB, contact Holly Thompson at (503) 526-2658 or at hthompson@ci.beaverton.or.us. More information can also be found at www.ci.beaverton.or.us.

(Dante Vivanco, continued from page 3) past. I'm glad that my friend was able to pull through and get past the abuse that others did to him. It didn't take a whole lot to make him happy, for all he wanted was to find his niche in the world. Fortunately he did.

In the United States we try and pride ourselves on the fact that we celebrate diversity and the things that make all of us different, whether it is religion, race, creed, gender, or sexual preference. So I ask you, why is it so hard for kids in high school to be respectful to others or at least keep their mouths shut? I am sure that most of you, having gone through high school, understand that there is a strong social ladder that exists at all high schools in our country. This ladder needs to be shortened. Not just to five or six steps, but to one big step that we can all share. The harassment that goes on in our schools isn't a topic that can be placed on the back burner until it gets so bad that kids like my friend make a poor decision with what to do with their lives.

(Caitlin Brennan, continued from page 3) on Children and Families Community Engagement Committee. I joined the meetings and committee with a fellow MYAB member, Jason Lee. From there, the Washington County Youth Advisory Counsel was born. A core group of dedicated Washington County staff members and youth revived the Washington County Youth Advisory Counsel (WCYAC). As a board, under the direction of the Commission, we have made presentations to local and county officials on "Take the Time," a countywide initiative encouraging adult involvement in the lives of the youth.

I joined the LOC Youth Advisory Counsel for all of the same reasons. As a board, we are currently putting together a pamphlet on harassment, to be distributed to high schools, youth organizations and other youth counsels.

Through the YACs, youth have a voice in an adult-dominated arena. Youth are a resource and should be treated as such. If we are the future, shouldn't we have some input in it? Youth advisory counsels provide an abundance of opportunities, limited only by a lack of creativity. I joined my first youth counsel as an eager 15 year-old. Now I am 18 and college looms on the horizon. Always outspoken, I have become more confident in sharing my ideas. Now, I believe it is my responsibility to encourage youth to do the same. Hopefully, every governing body will look to the youth for ideas and advice.