



Youth Congress Inaugural Meeting
April 29, 2007
212 St. Joseph St., Mobile, AL
3-4:00 p.m.

Youth Program Representatives: YGAB members
Dearborn YMCA
Volunteer Mobile Impact
Mobile Ed. Fdn. Superintendent Adv. Board
YMCA North Mobile
Youth Leadership Mobile
Boys & Girls Clubs Southwest Alabama
Boy Scouts of America
St. Paul's Campaigners
Big Brothers, Big Sisters
Young Life

Lead Facilitator: Dr. Joel Lewis, Youth Leadership Mobile

YGAB Facilitators: Lisa E. Hirsch, Janine S. Phillips

Under the direction of CFSA staff, the Inaugural Meeting of the Youth Congress met on April 29, 2007 at 3 p.m. right after the grant awards presentation. Approximately 25 youth representatives from 11 youth leadership/service programs in Mobile and Baldwin Counties were in attendance. The purpose of this program was to make youth aware of all the various youth leadership programs in our area, network, and possibly collaborate in the future on various projects.

To start the session, the youth introduced themselves and their programs. Afterwards, Dr. Joel Lewis, Director of Youth Leadership Mobile, divided the youth into four groups to individually answer the below questions. Their answers immediately follow.

1. How can youth do to better their schools?
 - a. Ask for more extra curricular clubs, i.e. sports, religious, accountability
 - b. Ask schools to provide moral direction
 - c. Ask schools for more qualified tutors
 - d. Ask for peer counselors
 - e. Spread awareness about the importance of good character
 - f. Have talks with big organizations to inspire youth

- g. Ask schools to have less restrictions on ministries
 - h. Have a principal advisory board
2. What are some of our community needs?
 - a. community service classes
 - b. volunteerism/involvement
 - c. provide food to elderly
 - d. homelessness
 - e. animal abuse & neglect
 - f. sidewalks & street signs
 - g. literacy
 - h. education; decrease drop out rates
 - i. drug/alcohol prevention/awareness
 - j. health awareness
 - k. more funding for medical insurance with better benefits
 3. How do we get youth citizens interested in becoming involved in the community?
 - a. through counselor awareness
 - b. community action clubs, i.e. school congress in which members can voice opinions about community needs
 - c. through announcements, posters, flyers, t-shirts, commercials
 - d. provide a youth congress registration table at school pre-registration
 - e. spread the word by mouth
 - f. require community service in all schools
 - g. provide scholarships focused on community service
 4. What are the needs of our youth?
 - a. more after school community activities to keep youth busy and not idle
 - b. more leadership programs to encourage and strengthen skills
 - c. participate in faith based organizations to encourage character growth
 - d. community involvement
 - e. political awareness
 - f. build interschool relationships among public and private
 - g. mentors for parents/fathers

After sharing their answers with the whole group, it was obvious these youth were deep thinkers and understood some of the complexities of our area. They were anxious to express their opinions and learn leadership skills, wanting to continue meeting next year.

Since this is a new developing initiative of the Youth Grant Allocation Board of The Community Foundation of South Alabama, more information on upcoming meetings will be provided this summer on the Foundation's website. Youth leadership program directors are encouraged to contact our office at 438-5591 for participation of their members in future meetings.