



IGNITING THE SPARK: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION YOUTH ENGAGEMENT MODELS

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY
PHILANTHROPY & YOUTH
PHILANTHROPY CONNECT,
A PROGRAM OF THE FRIEDA C. FOX
FAMILY FOUNDATION

LOCATED: Natick, Massachusetts

WEBSITE:

www.foundationformetrowest.org

MISSION: Foundation for MetroWest connects philanthropic opportunity with demonstrated need. We promote philanthropy in the region, help donors maximize the impact of their local giving, serve as a resource for local nonprofit organizations, and improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

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Inspiring, Empowering and Engaging Youth as Leaders in the Foundation for MetroWest Community

Who is Involved:

- Youth from the MetroWest Boston communities
- Led and managed by staff from the Foundation for MetroWest

Youth Programming History and Scope:

The Foundation for MetroWest has been committed to educating the next generation of community leaders through the *Youth in Philanthropy* (YIP) program since 1997. In that time, over 1,100 middle school and high school youth from MetroWest communities have granted almost \$900,000 to more than 140 local nonprofits serving youth.

This experiential opportunity is offered across 12 programs in both schools and community groups in the MetroWest Boston communities. Throughout YIP, youth learn about the needs in the MetroWest communities, how nonprofit organizations work, and the importance of giving back to the community. YIP brings together groups of up to 20 middle and high school age students to have a voice in making a real impact in the communities in which they live. These youth read grant proposals from area nonprofit organizations serving children and youth and fundraise to support these programs they select as a group.

Participants are empowered through the program to form their own Board through an election by their peers. They learn to lead meetings and speak in front of a group about programs they wish to support. Site visits to select nonprofit organizations are also an integral part of the experience before the youth make a collective decision about which grants they wish to fund. Youth present their recommendations of grants to members of the Foundation's board and grant distribution committee for their approval. A culminating award presentation ceremony brings together the youth and nonprofit organizations to celebrate the grants. YIP has been launched in 19 implementations sites including schools, organizations, and the community since 1997.

New Youth Engagement Strategy:

YIP launched the *Summer Institute for Youth Leadership* in 2014 and the program has evolved to a four-day program for high school students and will include a three-day program for middle school students in 2016. These workshops educate youth about grantmaking and philanthropy education and include guest speakers at each session to teach a variety of life skills, including personal finance, resume writing, presentation skills, and finding leadership style and strengths.



Youth Perspective:

The two years I spent in YIP really taught me a lot about my place in society as well as important skills for serving on a board and making important decisions that I have brought with me to college and have helped me out numerous times.

I've learned through the program not only about what it takes to identify an effective organization that needs help, but also about what it takes to be truly helpful. It's been an interesting, illuminating, and gratifying experience, and it feels good to help real people in a meaningful way.

The philanthropy experience was really a special experience for me and I'll be able to carry it with me for the rest of my life. I guess I could say that I found a way to give meaning to my life through this experience, which has inspired my desire to study business and run a corporation and be involved in philanthropy later in life.

YIP opens up your eyes to a world or people who live right near you. It teaches you how to look at organizations with a critical eye and discern how effective it is. YIP also taught me how to collaborate with others and voice my opinions. Since I didn't know anyone in the program, I was reserved with my opinions but as we bonded over our love for service I was incline to share them.

Parent Perspective:

here are few opportunities for our children to learn about philanthropy while also gaining leadership talent. I know for our son, who has done quite a bit in the way of community service, it opened his eyes to needs beyond his community and to experience the satisfaction of giving. The research and visits really hit home and painted a vivid picture of how fortunate we are.

School Perspective:

Your program is wonderful in so many ways. I was most struck by the awareness the students had gained of the depth of need in their own backyards. So many adults don't have an understanding of the vast economical disparity represented in the MetroWest communities. Now, because of your program, these students have that realization. Terrific program. I enjoyed it immensely.

—School Advocate

