



MAKING IT FUN AND INTERESTING

Make meetings fun so that youth will want to attend!

Food at Meetings

Youth always appreciate dinner during a meeting. Some youth councils make dinner for the meeting and others order pizza.

Field Trips

Some youth centres offer field trips for youth council members. This might include a camping trip, a youth conference, a bonding sleepover night, a trip to the movies or to the bowling alley. Trips are a good opportunity for team building in the youth council.

Social Time

Youth councils take care of a lot of business, but it is important to make the meetings fun as well. This could mean providing a time before or after to socialize or play games/sports. Or entering the meeting with a light heart and joking around as you go about your business.

Training

In Duncan, youth councils have a leadership development day every year. This day includes training on topics necessary for running an effective youth council, such as taking minutes, public speaking, learning about how youth councils can be organized, and budget reading. These skills are also valuable job skills. If youth are learning practical skills through their work in the youth council, the value of their participation might seem more obvious to them.

Special Talents

Try to find out what special skills your youth council members have. Do they like to play guitar, do karaoke, play hockey? Then try to help them create projects that use these skills. For example, they could organize talent-shows or sports tournaments, or they could offer workshops to other youth at the centre.

Transport

Sometimes youth want to be involved but they simply don't have a reliable way to get to meetings. If your centre has a van, try picking youth up and bringing them to meetings.

GETTING INVOLVED IN PROJECTS

Youth council members are more likely to stay involved if they are working on something interesting, such as organizing a big project like a dance, trip or fundraising event. People may lose interest if not much is going on. If you are stuck for ideas about how youth councils can meaningfully participate in the youth centre, here are some suggestions:

Youth Councils can...

- Create the rules of the youth centre
- Decide what activities and/or training the youth centre will do
- Help out when things get busy at the youth centre
- Act as role models to other youth
- Participate in the governance of the friendship centre by sitting on or making recommendations to the Board of Directors
- Address needs in the community through service projects
- Get involved in political lobby through letter writing, etc.
- Help the youth workers to understand the needs of the youth
- Learn leadership skills
- Develop and implement fundraising projects for the youth centre
- Go on trips
- Plan social activities for the youth centre and youth council
- Review the budget and funding proposal for the youth centre
- Decide how to resolve conflict between youth at the centre
- For more ideas, check out our fundraising brochure!



VALUING YOUTH

If youth feel their work is valued, they will be more likely to participate.

Membership Cards

In Terrace, youth council members get a membership card with their picture on it and a youth worker's signature on the back. Something like this can make youth feel like a valued member of the friendship centre.

Official Recognition

It is a good idea to publicly recognize youth council members and acknowledge their hard work. In Terrace, youth council members are recognized on Aboriginal day. In Lillooet, youth workers visit the high school awards ceremony and present awards to youth council members in front of the school. Several centres have special dinners at the youth centre to honor youth council members who have gone above and beyond their duties, and sometimes youth are honored at Friendship Centre volunteer appreciation day.

Gifts/Awards

Some youth councils receive a gift or award for recognition. Examples are T-shirts, sweaters, or bags with the youth centre logo on them. In Kelowna and Mission, youth may receive a gift certificate or movie ticket when they have done exceptional work.

Positive Reinforcement

It is a good idea for youth workers and other friendship centre employees to remind youth council members of the important role they play in running the youth centre. Often, youth council members are considered role models to other youth, and they may be people that youth workers can ask to help out when things get hectic at the youth centre. Remember to thank them often for their work.

School Credit

In some schools systems, youth need to complete a certain number of hours of community service, and youth council work can fill that requirement (for example in Duncan and Lillooet). If your school system does this too, make sure that youth know their youth council work will give them school credit.

