

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Adult Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested adults must submit the following:

- Mayor's Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Miccio First Name Megan MI _____

Employer The Bridge Project

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone 303 931-6076

E-mail Megan.miccio@du.edu

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

see attached page

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

see attached page

Miccio

Signature of Adult Applicant (required)

2/20/2017

Date

All materials must be received by February 21, 2017 and can be scanned and emailed or mailed using the following information:

ATTN: Mikhail Vafeades, Office of Children's Affairs

201 W. Colfax Ave. Dept 1101

Denver, CO 80202

Email: mikhail.vafeades@denvergov.org

Only candidates with complete applications will be contacted and interviewed. Finalist will be recommended to the Mayor for his consideration and appointment. Please call Mikhail Vafeades if you have any questions at 720-913-0904.

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission?

Listening & Hearing – It's one thing to listen to youth but it's another to actually hear what they are saying. One thing I enjoy about my work is hearing what the youth want to do and helping guide them towards that opportunity.

Collaboration – It takes a village! The youth I work with are like my second family. I love connecting with others who are passionate about working with youth and seeing them thrive. The staff at the Bridge Project are so caring and compassionate that it makes my job easy knowing the youth are always in good hands.

Building Relationships – I feel this is one of my biggest strengths. It is the reason I have been with Bridge for 7 years. I value every single relationship I have made with the youth and young adults I work with. I couldn't imagine being anywhere else. Building strong positive relationships is the foundation of trust especially for a young person. If they do not trust you they want nothing to do with you.

Forward Thinking – "Be the change you wish to see in the world" One of the youth I work with just recently reminded me of the quote and it is very fitting with the work they are doing. Particularly with what the country is currently going through the youth are so determined to see and make changes. I feel I can be that catalyst to propel them forward.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities – Indicate past or present

I currently work as the Youth Voice Coordinator for The Bridge Project. The mission of the Bridge Project is to provide a path for youth in Denver's public housing neighborhoods to graduate from high school and go on to attend college or choose a vocation by engaging them in educational opportunities and facilitating the development of life skills and self-sufficiency. I specifically work with our middle school youth around the YELL (Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning) curriculum. The YELL curriculum is truly youth led and gives the students the opportunity to work on projects affecting their communities.

Along with the YELL group of students I oversee an 8-member Youth Action Board (YAB). The YAB is comprised of 2 students from each Bridge location. We meet monthly to go over what each YELL group is working on and how and where we can present our final project within the community. The YAB students also analyze data collected within the Bridge Project to understand what students want and will then make recommendations to appropriate staff. The YAB students plan a yearly Youth Leadership Summit to invite other youth around the community to share what they are working on. The second annual Youth Leadership Summit will be held in August at the Graduate School of Social Work.

Since working for the Bridge Project for the last 7 years I have continued to grow my network. In 2012 I joined the Rocky Mountain Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Board of Directors. I held the President position for 2 years and remain a current Board member.

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

I was inclined to apply because one of the youth I currently work with (Elvis Daboni) on the Youth Action Board was interested in applying. Should Elvis and I both be accepted I think we can bring a positive perspective of how youth and adults work together. I have known Elvis for 7 years and have seen the extraordinary commitment he has to his family, friends, community and The Bridge Project. I have been so impressed working with Elvis over the years. I believe this would be a great opportunity for the both of us to work in this capacity together. Elvis has taught me to be a better leader which I feel I can bring to the MYC.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

As previously stated I work with youth on the YELL curriculum. The topics each of the 4 Bridge Project locations have selected are; Racism, Cyberbullying, Depression/Suicide and Immigration policy. I would love to see how these issues are being addressed at the Mayor's level. I would like to understand what others in the community are currently doing to address these issues.

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- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Ceteways First Name Yakini MI _____
Employer Friends First
Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____ Cell Phone 734-530-8722
E-mail cyakin@gmail

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

I am a mentor to over 60 students in DPS.
I also am a certified Self Defense Instructor that has a mentor
program that I do
Work/Extra curricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed) the side
I work at Friends First which specializes in Peer to Peer
Mentoring. I come from Detroit public school system
where I have served as a Dean of Students for 5 yrs.

[Signature]
Signature of Adult Applicant (required)

1/20/17
Date

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Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

I want to expand my capacity as a leader in the community to address needs and concerns facing our youth. I believe this position will allow room for that.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I feel like our youth's biggest challenge is how to navigate through this world socially + emotionally. It plays heavily on their identity and in turn, the students adopt whatever image of themselves and others that ~~is~~ society projects onto them.

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- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Avila First Name Gladys MI _____
Employer University of Colorado, Barbara Davis Center Type 1
Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____ Cell Phone 559-307-1800
E-mail gladysvila@gmail.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

therapeutic mental health skills, program development,
teach resiliency skills, expertise in substance abuse, high risk behavioral work

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

Current position mental health therapist; Past: juvenile justice system,
department of corrections, advocacy work, mentor, volunteer work with youth.



Signature of Adult Applicant (required)

3/10/17

Date

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I remember growing up in a world where there was no anxiety or fear. I lived every day to hang out with my father. An immigrant from Mexico who had a dream to send back home all the money he earned despite his new wife and daughter, me. That did not last very long as my mother was strong and willing to work hard to build their dream but not so willing to give up her hard-earned money. By the time I was fifteen years old, I was hiring and firing employees. I bought inventory, paid my parents mortgage and more exciting to me, negotiated business deals. At the young age of eighteen, I became an entrepreneur. I thought I was on top of the world. Then in my mid to late twenties, right on target with research, my brain matured. What I thought was a good life soon became boring and distasteful. I was not maximizing my full potential. My travels pushed me away from conforming to my California norm and my curiosity for the diversity in people made me seek more.

One day, after birthing two children and one divorce, I decided to move to Vancouver, Washington. I left my business, family and friends in search of me. Turns out all I needed was some time to reflect. It was there where I earned a B.S in Psychology and a minor in Criminology. Soon my interest took me to work with at risk youth through the juvenile justice system, sex offenders through the department of corrections, domestic violence survivors through the YWCA whose mission is to eliminate racism and empower women. I wanted more! So, I moved to Denver where I earned a Master's of Social Work from the University of Denver.

Hello. My name is Gladys Villa. I am a licensed clinical social worker that lives every day to educate and empower individuals to discover that life can be different. Over the past ten years, I have helped youth and families build resiliency skills through education, resourcing, therapeutic techniques, program development and research. My favorite part of my work day is teaching families how to communicate with each other as it improves family dynamics and generalizes into everyday living. It is important that our youth be empowered to advocate for themselves and for their community to build healthy strong connections.

My goal as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission (MYI) is to expand and share my skills to implement macro level interventions that specifically target resiliency building in youth and families. It is proven research and I whole heartedly believe in the power of resiliency as it is the foundation for meaning and thus motivating the desire to live. Aside from my unequivocal passion for promoting mental health, addressing the disproportionate use of expulsions and suspensions in schools is an important social problem to address. Keeping children in schools and out of prison creates a healthy economy. I hope to work as a team to develop and implement access to youth support programs and resiliency skills building. Moreover, my work and participation in research at the Barbara Davis Center for Childhood Diabetes has expanded by expertise to include the integration of mental health and chronic illness.

What else can I contribute to MYI? Enthusiasm, diverse life experiences, languages, a desire to give back to my community, my dream and, of course, a sense of humor. Thank you for taking the time to learn a bit about me and my interest to promote mental health care and resiliency in our community. Gladys Villa, LCSW, MAC

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

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Last Name GOMEZ First Name ANDREW MI J
Employer HOFFMANN, PARKER, WILSON & CARBERRY
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone (720) 376-6527 Cell Phone (858) 784-1672
E-mail ATG@HPWCLAW.COM

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

SEE ATTACHED

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

SEE ATTACHED


Signature of Adult Applicant (required)

3/22/2017
Date

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What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I'd like to think I can connect with youth in a way that most young adults cannot. From toddlers to teenagers, I've interacted with a wide range of youth that draws on certain experiences. I've coached football to five-year olds and art classes to developmentally disabled teenagers. A common theme throughout these experiences is that I love to give back and help develop future leaders that will make the world a better place.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities

Football coach – YMCA of Boulder Valley

Volunteer – Red Cross, 2013 Colorado floods

Mentor – Minds Matter

Volunteer – Colorado Legal Nights

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

I believe it's important to pay it forward as homage to some of the mentors I encountered when I was younger – coaches, teachers, older students, etc. I certainly did not go it alone and I would expect that the selected Youth could certainly use someone to help guide them through their many endeavors.

I also think it's important that an Adult Commissioner be someone who is gainfully employed to lead as an example and to demonstrate to the Youth that, no matter your background, any sort of ambition can lead to a fulfilling life. Growing up, money was always a concern in my household, yet, as cliché as it sounds, I knew that education could provide for upward mobility. I was ambitious enough to set certain goals and, fortunately, things worked out. While that is certainly great for me, what is sometimes lost in the shuffle is the message that a traditional education is the *only* means toward a fulfilling life. I think it's important to stress that we are all different thinkers with varied backgrounds and that there is no one magic pill that gets you through life. It's important that the Youth recognize that, as you get older, priorities will change and your ability to overcome obstacles will be likely your greatest strength. I am just one example of a certain trajectory and I hope that I can demonstrate that determination and hard work is invaluable.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

This can be better answered by the youth themselves, not some yuppie 29 year-old who isn't originally from Denver. But in my experience, there is always a need to stress the importance of civic engagement, especially in today's tense climate. We need to find a way to make the Youth care about bringing their communities together, rather than alienating one another. I think a situation particularly unique to Denver is the displacement of families who are being priced out of their homes. I'm curious to see what the Youth think about that.

Moreover, a related issue that I think future generations need to be prepared for is a changing workplace that relies heavily on technology and automation. Are the Youth equipped to deal with that changing dynamic? Do they take an interest in how the workplace is evolving? Do they think about how to be proactive, rather than reactive in regards to the workplace evolution?

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

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- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Fierberg First Name Dylan MI R

Employer City and County of Denver

Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone (303)-726-1947


E-mail dylan.fierberg@denvergov.org

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

I have a MA in Applied Psychology and eight years of experience working directly with youth and their families, along with experience with community engagement and grassroots organizing. I work well with young people, easily develop rapport, value youth-directed learning and enjoy facilitating this growth.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

I am a current social caseworker for DDHS in Youth Services division, partnering with youth and their families to promote healthy and thriving families, a Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer, member of the AWARE-C advisory board, and the Prevention Institute's Making Connections for Mental Health and Well-being of Young Men of Color stakeholder's group.


Signature of Adult Applicant (required)

3/8/2017
Date

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Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

The Mayor's Youth Commission is an incredible example of civic engagement and collaboration between local government and the people we serve. Mayor Hancock's commitment to young people in our community is fantastic, and by calling upon the youth themselves to determine priorities and empowering them to hold those priorities among this group and their peers ensure that change is reflective of the needs of the community and will be championed by the people the change effects.

Working in Youth Services, I interact with many young people who are disenfranchised and don't feel that they "belong" anywhere. They face countless obstacles and often lack the support and resources to be successful. As I examine the priorities laid out by the Mayor's Youth Commission, I recognize issues that impact the youth I work with at a disproportional level. I have the ability to bring the perspective of many young people not involved in these conversations and create space for the youth commissioners to understand the obstacles preventing many involved in child welfare from being successful in their teen years. While there are many adults invested in addressing systemic barriers that influence opportunities and outcomes for children and youth, I believe that empowering young people to engage in the dialogue and shape the movement is an intentional and necessary element of creating a more equitable future for the youth of Denver.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

Mental illness is one of the most prevalent issues in America and with 1 in 5 children living with a serious mental health condition, it is vital that youth understand how to destigmatize mental illness among themselves and their peers, and advocate for better and more readily available resources. It is exciting that the Mayor's Youth Commission has already made this a priority and I believe that my involvement, as a professional with a background in psychology as well as a Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer, can provide valuable insight and direction to continue this mission. Through addressing issues of mental health, we are also able to bring light to groups most affected by these issues, like LGBTQ youth and people of color, who are so often left out of the conversation.

In addressing mental illness, we can also explore the ideas of wellness and what components need to be in place for an individual, child, youth or adult, to be well. Things such as equality in education, access to basic needs resources, positive community role models, and job training and opportunities all influence a person's wellbeing and should be discussed as we attempt to strengthen our community's response to mental health. It is important that young people understand the social determinants of health, especially as they relate to mental health, because these young people will have the ability to influence a shift in values and priorities as they move through the world, armed with the understanding that there are many ways to work towards equity and social justice.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Last Name: Ford

First Name: Josh

Employer: Denver City and county

Home Address: [REDACTED] City: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: 808-785-4903

E-mail: joshua.r.ford@colorado.edu

The Mayor's youth commission is like the Avengers to me. Everyone who's a part of this group possesses a special super power or powers. I love the interdependence of the group, bringing both sides together. I love that it's giving a voice to youth and not telling them "what to do". I believe the mission/ ideas will be solid. What I will bring to this group will be leadership, team work but most importantly "the gift of understanding". A lot of people in the world look past this trait but it's a characteristic that has led me to success. Understanding other people, understanding situations, understanding youth and just understanding that people are different. Seeking understanding has also provided me with great patience which has helped me with implementation, crisis management and relationship building. I will also bring other skills such as empathetic listening, youth mental health knowledge (I'm certified), and safety. I think youth deal with a lot and they just want someone to listen. Beyond listening they also want to see results. I feel a lot of people talk about how to "fix" the problem, but they never do. A lot of issues get neglected. Today's youth deal with a lot of problems such as physical health, mental health issues and more. I love to help people, I love to embrace challenges. I would love to be a part of this team.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—

- University Of Colorado Graduate
- University of Colorado- Athlete D1 Football
- Civic Canopy/ Colorado 9 to 25 youth advisor 2014-2015
- Denver Parks and Rec Instructor/RSR -2015-Present
- Collective Impact board member

- Special Olympics coach/ volunteer
- Professional Athlete
- Motivational Speaker
- Youth advisor/ leader/ mentor
- Community Volunteer
- All Pro Dad

Collaborated with great people in the city such as Joey Pace, Benzel Jimmerson and more.

Signature of Adult Applicant (required) Date

X___Josh Ford___

THEY DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW, UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE"- ME

2016-2017 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested youth must submit the following:

- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Dennis First Name Dennis MI Truth
School Colorado Academy High School Grade for Fall 2016 10th Date of Birth November 21st, 2000
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone _____ Cell Phone 720-282-4721 E-mail Dennisdennis33@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Mekisha Boothe Phone 720-940-8321
Email Mboothe33@gmail.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

Organizational skills, flight coding skills, computer skills, listening skills, great team player, design thinking skills, social media management skills

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

! Squad 1.0 (coding team), basketball, young Americans bank business camp, DJ academy, student council

Dennis
Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

6/15/16
Date

Boothe
Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

6/15/16
Date

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201 W. Colfax Ave. Dept 1101

Denver, CO 80202

Email: mikhail.vafeades@denvergov.org

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Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

I feel that I could make a positive contribution to the commission. I'm very interested in the mission and I'd be honored to have a part in making an impact for the students and youth as a whole in Denver. I feel that I can bring not only a positive attitude but a unique perspective on issues and solutions to problems we may discuss. For example I feel that this commission has the ability to address some key issues that Denver students face constantly. I know first hand as a DPS how difficult it can be to find motivation academically when my teachers aren't worried about my academic success. Finding an alternate solution to help Denver kids engage in their learning and celebrate their successes is a possible project. I also feel that the commission will provide me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills as well as continue to learn the importance of communication and working toward a common goal to improve the well being of others in my community. I believe that I bring a unique attitude as well. I pride myself on my optimism and my desire to see the group succeed. The MYC will allow me to be apart of something that really gives the Denver youth a voice and I wouldn't take that opportunity for granted.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I believe that a huge issue is that the youth aren't properly engaged in school. I feel like it's important that commission takes an extra step to reach out to the youth and stress the importance of prioritizing learning first. I've seen first hand through my peers how negative it can be to take education for granted. I also believe that we need to address the teachers of DPS the importance of doing their absolute best to go above and beyond for their students. I know how impactful it can be when a teacher establishes a connection with my parents and I as well as how detrimental it is when a teacher shows no interest in seeing their student progress. A possible solution could be to create or organize either events at schools that allow families and teachers to converse and openly speak about issues they've been having or even just talking and getting to know each other better. Another issue I think we could address is the distance between the youth of Denver. I feel it's important to express the importance of community and interacting with each other. Getting to know others from all over Denver and meeting new people. I know that I don't know very many people myself and I'd like to meet new people and connect. Aside from student engagement, social equality and bullying is always a prominent issue that should always be addressed. I have a very strong opinion on bullying and I feel like it's a neglected issue that doesn't receive the attention and importance it deserves. There's always some way to make a positive impact, prevent bullying, and promote kindness.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

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- Youth Commission Application
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- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Whitehead-Bust First Name Mackenzie MI _____
School Denver School of the Arts Grade for Fall 2017 12 Date of Birth 10/27/99
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone 303-377-6162 Cell Phone 720-841-1608
E-mail mack.wb99@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Alyssa Whitehead-Bust Phone 720-841-1608
Email afwb@me.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

I have strong writing skills (I've done grant writing for a couple of organizations, major in creative writing at DSA, and attended Iowa Young Writer's Institute this past summer), good people skills which allow me to engage with people who are very different from me in their backgrounds or philosophical viewpoints. I am good at
Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

Youth Advisory Board for Colorado Young Leaders, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado Cairns youth member, Varsity XC East High, Currently at The Mountain School of Milton Academy semester school

Signature of Youth Applicant (required) 2/20/17
Date

Alyssa Whitehead-Bust

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required) 2/20/17
Date

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Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

Throughout my childhood, both of my parents have been involved with reforming public education in Colorado. From the time I was really young, I was constantly around public school educators and people who were somehow involved with public policy in education. I was raised with a unique lens that taught me to constantly be aware of the privilege I have within the public school system—privilege that comes from my race, class and zip code.

More recently, after being a student in public school throughout my education, spending a lot of time engaged in social justice and volunteering, and pursuing discussions about educational equity with other adults and peers in my life, I became interested in equity for my own reasons, separate from my parents. Over the last several years I have spent time at Pine Ridge Native American Reservation, and have subsequently become engaged as a youth leader on Lakota rights. The education system on the reserve is dysfunctional in many ways. With the dropout rate being over 70%, and teacher turnover about 800% more than the national average, making it through high school is a rarity. Spending time at Pine Ridge has provided me personal experience for the same headlines I've heard discussed around the dinner table all my life: "a poor education system is one of the most detrimental forces on a community" and fueled for me a greater passion for understanding the systems that create these unjust patterns.

Simultaneous to my developing a passion for working on the educational rights of the Lakota people, my family has become foster family. For the past few years, we have welcomed kids in trauma into our home. Being a foster sister has given me unique insight on the foster care and public health systems of our city and has further shaped my ability to interact with people of all backgrounds. I've gained a new skill set in interacting with kids and adults who are very different from me. My experience as a foster sister has been humbling, to say the least. It has been challenging and frustrating—while also gratifying and purposeful—on a daily basis. My current foster sister came to our home 3 grade levels behind and having attended a failing school that ultimately was closed due to poor performance. Not only did the public education system fail her, so too did the department of human services. Feeling like a child's future hinges on the quality of the governmental system that supports him/her is disempowering. And yet, what is so incredible and exciting about living in a democracy is that I have complete power to change what I see could be better in my city. MYC is an opportunity to have my voice heard in an environment where it has the opportunity to be paired with honest influence over our local democratic systems. No person should feel disempowered by a government intended to support and empower them.

Being on the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission is a unique opportunity to understand and impact broader systems and structures within our city. I've heard a little about the impact that the Commission has had throughout the years from Estee Dechtman, and was immediately impressed by initiatives such as implementing the day of mental health awareness in DPS. It is rare for young people to be able to work so closely with their government systems, and I am eager for the possibility of being part of such an impactful and diverse group.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

While I am excited to engage across many issues affecting youth, I am particularly interested in drawing from my personal experience and engaging on solution generation to support more equitable access to quality education for foster youth and Native American youth. From my experience being a foster sister for the past three years, my eyes have been opened to the fundamental inequity of our city's education and public mental health systems. The sad truth is our system is too fragmented to successfully provide foster children in Denver, especially those who struggle with mental health issues, with the care they need. The achievement gap between foster kids and kids who live in functional families is startling. Homeless youth in Colorado are twice as likely to graduate high school than foster kids in Colorado. This reality is inexcusable. But it is not unsolvable. I am not so ambitious as to think we could narrow the achievement gap merely with work done by the MYC, but I do believe there are many ways we could make a dent in this problem. Creating awareness about Denver's foster care system, building relationships and mentorships for students in the foster system, and building practices that make foster students feel like they are being heard and supported by the Denver's youth, are all things that could work towards this overarching goal.

On a broader scale, I would love to think about working with Denver officials and high school students to create a more accessible connection between students and politics for students- not just on the MYC- but for all students. We are living in a unique time in history, and now more than ever it is imperative that high school students understand how to engage across perspective, across race, across class, across schools in respectful dialogue about social justice, politics, and creating change in our communities. I would love to work towards creating a day for students in high school to learn more about their government and how to engage in it, not just from a historical or purely informational lens, but with the intention of creating a community of young people in Denver who are inspired and prepared to make a difference in their worlds.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested youth must submit the following:

- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Dabuni First Name Elvis MI I
School Merrill Middle School Grade for Fall 2017 9th Date of Birth 02/19/2003
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone 720-424-0521 Cell Phone 720-300-3000
E-mail ~~Amey.dabuni@gmail.com~~ Elvis.dabuni@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Amey Dabuni Phone 720-424-0521
Email Amey.Dabuni@gmail.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

I am very energetic and as a black male can
bring a new point of view to the commission.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

Student Council for 5 years volunteered for
board work for age on youth admissions

Elvis Dabuni

02/21/17

Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

Date

[Signature]

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

Date

All materials must be received by February 21, 2017 and can be scanned and emailed or mailed using the following information:

ATTN: Mikhail Vafeades, Office of Children's Affairs

201 W. Colfax Ave. Dept 1101

Denver, CO 80202

Email: mikhail.vafeades@denvergov.org

Only candidates with complete applications will be contacted and interviewed. Finalist will be recommended to the Mayor for his consideration and appointment. Please call Mikhail Vafeades if you have any questions at 720-913-0904.

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

Since I can remember I have always had a need to help people big or small I know that this Council will help me do that help me become a better person make right decisions my unique perspective will be on the African American community not just kids but adults and not just about compliance but about improving the community

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I would like to be apart of the construction and business because I want to be a business man myself

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I am very energetic and as a black male can bring view point of the African community.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities – Indicate past or present

Student council for 5 years

Volunteered for food bank

Works for Bridge on Youth Action Board (YAB)

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's youth commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring to MYC?

Since I can remember I have always had a need to help people big or small. I know that this council will help me to that, help me become a better person. My unique perspective will be on the African American community not just kids but adults and not just about complaining but about improving the community.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission.

I would like to be a part of the construction and business because I want to be a business man myself.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested youth must submit the following:

- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Vafeades First Name Serenity MI N
School East High School Grade for Fall 2017 11 Date of Birth 09/23/2000
Home Address 195 Netherland St City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone _____ Cell Phone 303-359-7155
E-mail zenlove2112@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Jubal Vafeades Phone 720-261-0202
Email jubalvesweetie@msn.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

Serenity Vafeades
Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

01/22/17
Date

Jubal Vafeades
Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

1/22/17
Date

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What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission?

The skills that I would bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission are that I am a critical thinker and can see issues from multiple points of view. As a sophomore, I took a Law class. In this class, we had to argue cases from both the defendants side and the plaintiffs side. To do this, I had to come up with conflicting arguments with the same information given. This skill would be very helpful when addressing and discussing issues that affect our community. Seeing things from multiple points of view allows me to critically think about these issues and come up with new ideas and solutions.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—indicate past or present:

I currently work for the Central Park Recreation Center. I am a Rec Aid and I work in the Kid Watch section of the recreation center. I have also volunteered as a high school leader for the DPS Balarat program last year and this year.

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?

I want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission because I have always wanted to better my city. I was born and raised in Denver and I can see the changes going on around me. As a teenager, it feels like my future is being affected and I have no say. I believe the MYC is a great way for me to have a say about my future and the problems I see in my community. Instead of sitting back and watching what happens around me, I want to be an active participant in the place I call home. I will bring the unique perspective of being a minority in the public-school system, a member of a racially blended family, and a witness to both gentrification and the diminishing of the middle class. I believe it is incredibly important, especially with the recent election, for people my age to voice their concerns and opinions.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as a part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

The prominent issues I would like to address are the disparities between low income and minority students and the quality of public education they receive, including the lack of successful public schools in low income and minority neighborhoods. As well as the effect of gentrification on students. For example, the top elementary school, middle school, and high school (according to coloradoschoolgrades.com) in the Denver County 1 District are: Steck Elementary, Slavens K-8 school, and DSST Cole High school. Steck and Slavens are both public schools located in high income neighborhoods and have low minority enrollment. On the other hand, DSST Cole High school is in a low-income neighborhood but is not a public school. Regarding gentrification, when high income families move into low income neighborhoods they require better performing schools; thus, changing failing public schools to charter schools. This change affects the way students are taught and how low income and minority students adjust to these newly changed schools. I can attest to this because I went to a charter school and was aware of the noticeable and even negative differences between public and charter schools. I believe these issues are extremely pivotal to the academic success of students especially teens who are preparing for life after high school.



2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested youth must submit the following:

- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Abrams First Name Elaine MI 1
 School Denver Jewish Day School Grade for Fall 2017 9 Date of Birth 1/15/03
 Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
 Home Phone 303 949 7116 Cell Phone 720 737 2231
 E-mail elie.m.abrams@gmail.com
 Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
 Name Sharon Pincos Phone 303-321-9678
 Email SharonPincos@yahoo.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

Please see attached

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present. (please use additional page if needed)

Please see attached

Elaine Abrams 2/20/17

Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

Date

[Signature]

2/20/17

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

Date

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2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I have a strong work ethic, am a creative problem solver, and work well with other people.

What work/extracurriculars/volunteer do you participate in?

I am a member of the Teen Advisory Board of the Schlessman Library. I play on my school's volleyball and basketball teams. I am a writer for the Lowry Community Newspaper (Lowry Aviator) and my guest column is called "The Armchair Traveler". I am also building a website to support teenage leaders.

Please explain why you want to be part of the Mayor's Youth Commission. What unique perspective will you bring the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I want to be a part of the Mayor's Youth Commission so that I can effect change in Denver, particular in attitudes towards children and teens with learning disabilities. I would also like to gain new perspectives on issues that may be relevant to me and to my peers. I was fortunate to meet several members of the current commission who were proud of the impact they were having, I was inspired to apply for this opportunity, in order to feel the same sense of accomplishment.

I believe that I will bring the perspective of youth who live in Denver but do not necessarily go to public school. Approximately eight percent of youth in Denver attend private school. This is approximately 10,000 youth, I hope to be able to represent this large group of youth on the Mayor's Youth Commission.

I have been told by many of my peers and teachers that I bring a unique perspective when solving complex problems. I look at many things in a quantitative and analytical manner. For the past two summers, I have attended a program called "Camp Inc.". This program teaches entrepreneurial skills to young people, and the experience trained my mind to look at situations from a business and economic perspective.

I hope to have an impact on the issues teens are faced with on a regular basis. I hope that my tendency for leadership, being proactive, and my analytical skills will enable me to solve problems within the Mayor's Youth Commission. I believe that the Mayor's Youth Commission will expose me to different ways of approaching and solving issues youth face in Denver.

What prominent issues that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I am a dyslexic student. As a result, I am very passionate about youth with learning disabilities. I am most passionate about breaking down the stereotypes associated with having a learning disability, and about advocacy for those affected. Statistically one in ten students has a learning disability such as APD (Auditory Processing Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder), or Dyslexia.

When I was in fourth grade I was diagnosed with Dyslexia. I was distraught, I thought this meant I was not smart. Over time I learned that it just meant I needed some accommodations on certain activities, and sometimes I would have to work harder to understand a concept. Since I overcame my Dyslexia, several of my close friends have been diagnosed with learning disabilities. I watched them go through the same emotions that I experienced. They came to me for advice, because I had experienced this first hand. Eventually, they realized that this would not limit what they were able to accomplish in life, and that struggling with this made them stronger. Before they could realize this, however, their self esteem took a major blow. On the Mayor's Youth Commission I would like to address what having a learning disability does to the self esteem and confidence of youth in Denver.

Unfortunately, there are many stereotypes that dominate many people's perspective of learning disabilities. For example, it is a common misconception that students with Dyslexia read backwards. On the Mayor's Youth Commission, I would like to raise awareness of the true effects of learning disabilities. This would be for the benefit of students with these learning disabilities, so they could be informed about what this diagnosis actually means. However, this would also target their peers. It is important that their non-affected peers be informed about the struggles that some of their friends face. It would replace the stereotypes with factual information.

I am hopeful that I will have an opportunity to serve on the Mayor's Youth Commission in order to help the children and teens of Denver with not only learning disabilities, but with the many other challenges that they may be currently facing.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

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- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Dechtman First Name Barry MI B
School East High School Grade for Fall 2017 10th Date of Birth 8/30/02
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone 303-343-4404 Cell Phone 303-502-6916
E-mail bdechtman@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Jennifer Dechtman Phone 303-669-8889
Email jennifer@iddwebs.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

One of the skills that I will be able to bring to the commission will be cooperation. I partake in many extracurriculars such as tennis, rugby, and music. In all of these, I have to cooperate with many people as well as adapt which is another skill I can bring to the commission

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

I am a very passionate tennis player. I played for the East High School team. I also play rugby for East High School. I play the Baritone Saxophone in a jazz ensemble led by Keith Oxman. In the past I have volunteered at my synagogue.

Barry Dechtman _____ 3/9/17

Signature of Youth Applicant (required) _____ Date

Can M. Dechtman _____ 3/9/17

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required) _____ Date

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201 W. Colfax Ave. Dept 1101
Denver, CO 80202
Email: mikhail.vafeades@denvergov.org

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Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring the MYC? What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

One of the main reasons I want to be a commissioner is helping and listening to my peers. I have gone to Denver Public Schools since kindergarten and have met so many people with very different and unique backgrounds. Through these 10 years in the district, I have become aware of the many problems my peers and myself face. I would love to do anything I can to help fix these issues and bring them to the commission's attention.

One of the major issues I am enthusiastic about, is public transportation. I am no expert in the field. In fact, the first time I took the bus was 5 or 6 months ago. However, I am now a frequent user. One major issue I see is the demographic seems to stay constant. I have noticed people who can't afford to use a car take the bus. There is a socioeconomic stigma around public transportation in which people feel it is dangerous, unsafe and unreliable. Gustavo Petro, a Colombian politician said, "A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation." Being on the bus makes you part of a community and teaches you valuable life lessons. For example, the other day, I was on the bus and the driver pulled over. She told the bus to wait for 2 minutes. She pulled over in front of a 7/11. A couple people were upset by this but when she came back, she had 7 iced teas and 4 bags of chips. She dispersed these to the people on the bus. This was a real event that I witnessed on Colfax and Monaco. I learned more from this act of kindness than I have in the past two weeks of school. If I am on the commission, I will try my hardest to spread awareness and make an impact on the demographic.

This is one of many issues I would like to address but preventing prejudice in schools is very important to me. I see it almost everyday. I currently attend East High School and everyday, I am used to hearing racial slurs or other actions that could cause racial tension. In my 8th grade language arts class, I had many thought provoking discussions regarding prejudice in class. It was then that I discovered my voice to speak up for others. One way I would love to help resolve this conflict is through awareness. I know the ADL has programs established to prevent hate. I would love to implement these programs all throughout the district.

These are just 2 examples of the many different issues I would like to work on with the commission. I believe I would be a strong commissioner because I know how to listen, I am a hard worker, and I am reliable. Thank you for the consideration

Note: Teacher Recommendation is being sent to me and will arrive no later than Monday.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

To be considered for an interview, interested youth must submit the following:

- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Smith First Name Nephraferie MI J
School DSS T Stapleton HS Grade for Fall 2017 11th Date of Birth 11/13/00
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone 720-309-2304 Cell Phone 720-318-1665
E-mail nephraferiesmith@gmail.com
Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):
Name Renee Thrower-Smith Phone 720-309-2304
Email rthrowersmith@gmail.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

I am a very hard worker, diligent, resilient, motivated, as well as dedicated.

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

I have participated in STAMP, Students Taking Action Making progress. I am also a part of the youth advisory committee at children's hospital.

Nephraferie Smith

Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

3/2/17

Date

Renee L. Thrower-Smith

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

3/2/17

Date

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Denver, CO 80202

Email: mikhail.vafeades@denvergov.org

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Extracurricular Activities:

I am also currently working on creating a group called POC-POV with my classmates. This is going to be an initiative to bring about understanding of minority communities. I have also done landscaping around my community, babysat foster children, and volunteered at homeless shelters. I currently participate in NHS, National Honors Society, and am in pre-collegiate health program at Childrens Hospital. I am also about to go to Ensenada, Mexico to build houses with a service learning program I am in. Last but not least, I manage girls varsity basketball.

Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). What unique perspective will you bring to the MYC?

I would like to be a part of MYC because I and youth of my generation are the face of progress. The phrase, "Be the change you wish to see," has been drilled into me since my younger days. I believe one of the best ways to integrate positive change within a community is from the inside out. Chinua Achebe once said, "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Change is not conceived through the notion of eliminating the struggle, rather becoming a part of the DNA of the people. The perspective I wish to bring to MYC is society was not made on the predispositioned ideas of success, but the unknowing desire for life. The people are not the students, they are the educators.

What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

I would like to address the issue of racism. In my experience I have noticed the implicit racism that strikes many on a day to day basis. Not only have I experienced implicit racism, but the people around me have. When I am called a nigga or a bitch in front of a person of authority and consequences are failed to be enforced I cannot help but to think about the word okay. How someone was told that behavior was okay. How someone believes my life is nothing more than a female dog or a tutored mentality of the okay. Well I made the choice to no longer be the towel that wipes up unrevealed intention and unjustified decisions. I am going to be the change I wish to see.

2017-2018 Mayor's Youth Commission

Youth Commissioner Application

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- Youth Commission Application
- Completed Essay
- Letter of Recommendation

Last Name Lopez First Name Daniel MI A
School Denver School of Science and Technology Grade for Fall 2017 9th Date of Birth 07/22/2002
Home Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]
Home Phone 303-264-9250 Cell Phone 303-523-9202 E-mail danielantoniolopez9@gmail.com

Alternate Contact (parent or guardian):

Name Luz Croghan Phone 303-264-9250
Email luzbelinda2215@gmail.com

What skills do you bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission? (please use additional page if needed)

See additional page

Work/Extracurricular/Volunteer Activities—Indicate past or present: (please use additional page if needed)

See additional page

Daniel Lopez
Signature of Youth Applicant (required)

2/1/2017
Date

Luz Croghan
Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

2/1/2017
Date

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Denver, CO 80202

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1. What skills do you bring to the Mayor' Youth Commission?

Some skills that I bring to the Mayor's Youth Commission are public speaking and organization skills. I have also been recognized as a well-mannered young man. I can contribute to the Commission through advocacy. I will advocate for issues that I see or that have confronted me at some point in my life. Another contribution that I will make is be an enthusiastic and engaged member of the commission.

2. Work/~~Extracurricular~~/Volunteer Activities indicate past or present

Some extracurricular activities that I have attended are Environmental Learning for Kids (E.L.K.), Teen Advisory Board (TAB), and Snowboard Outreach Society (S.O.S.). E.L.K. is a non-profit program that educates children and teens about environmental activities, conservation and protection of resources. I have been a part of the program for 4 years. I am also a part of a program called TAB. TAB (Teen Advisory Board) is a program held at the Green Valley Ranch Library. We organize programs for teens and children. Some recent events that we have had are a Haunted House and a miniature golf course. Lastly, I am a member of a program called S.O.S Outreach. This program inspires youth to make positive decisions for healthy and successful lives through outdoor programs including taking children ages 8 to 18 snowboarding.

**3. Please explain why you want to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC).
What unique perspective will you bring the MYC?**

I would like to be a part of the Denver Mayor's Youth Commission to learn and grow. I think that this program will be a great opportunity to learn and grow. I also believe that this is also a once in a life time opportunity to work with the City and County of Denver at my age. A unique perspective that I would bring to the Commission is personality. I am honestly going to be my best self. I have the skill set to be a professional member and balance friendliness with leadership. I will support other members of the commission as needed as I am hard worker that can take a lot more on my plate than some may think. I will be the first to volunteer for any sort of activity. I will lead my peers by example.

4. What prominent issue(s) that affect youth, would you like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission?

A prominent issue that affects the youth that I would like to address as part of the Mayor's Youth Commission on Youth, is the power that Marijuana has on teens. Studies show that parents play a crucial role on contributing or reducing the effect the drug has on their children. As a member of SOS, we have a mentor that goes with us to the mountain to snowboard and pushes us to demonstrate the program's core values throughout the day. He also calls me personally once in a while to see how I'm doing and makes sure that if I need anything I am more than welcome to give him a call. I haven't needed anything yet, but just knowing that there is someone out there who is there for me when I need them feels wonderful. So, I think creating a program that is similar to having a big brother to look after the teen and show them the proper way to live their teen years Marijuana free is an issue I would like to address.