



# CITIZENS FOR A BETTER CITY

## Youth Representatives to Boards & Commissions & Civic Groups

### Need:

CBC seeks to continue to support Falls Church City Council and Boards and Commissions by engaging a broader group of the City's citizens, and promoting civic leadership development:

- Engaging busy adults to fill seats on Boards & Commissions, as well as civic groups, is a challenge.
- Parents naturally become engaged when their children are involved.

Many of City Boards and Commissions and civic groups have vacancies, and at the same time, finding meaningful volunteer opportunities for youth and engaging citizens is an on-going challenge.

### Invitation:

- Each Boards and Commissions, as well as civic groups, can have the opportunity to host 2 Youth Representatives each.
- Boards & Commissions, as well as civic groups, can self-select whether to host Youth Representatives for a one-year to two-year terms with terms beginning in the Fall each year.
- Youth Representative seats will be non-voting and youth will not participate in closed sessions.
- This can give youth a meaningful voice in our community and help engage parents in civic issues.

### Successful Pilot Results & City Support:

Falls Church City Council unanimously voted in May 2014 to support moving forward with this initiative. This effort has built on the School Board's successful pilot of a student representative position. 17 Youth Reps were appointed by City Council in the Fall of 2014, and this initial pilot has proven to be a largely successful effort.

- This initiative ties in directly with GMHS's IB diploma requirements for a Creativity, Action, Service project (CAS) as well as the goal of creating a new diploma program that includes service learning and civic engagement for a broader range of students
- In addition, CBC seeks to foster opportunities for individual students and groups to lead and execute special projects that support the City's Boards and Commissions, as well as civic groups.

### Goals:

1. Create opportunities for youth to learn about local government and civics in a hands-on way;
2. Give students opportunities to volunteer in meaningful ways;
3. Enhance students' college applications;
4. Better engage parents & peers in community issues; and
5. Demonstrate our City's commitment to youth by giving them a voice in decisions.

### **Promotion:**

CBC continues to work with GMHS staff and students, including civics teachers, guidance counselors, student government, and students in civics courses, as well as the community at large to promote this opportunity.

### **Eligibility:**

- All high school students living in Falls Church City are eligible to apply, including homeschooled and private school students.
- Sophomores are especially encouraged to apply so students can volunteer during their junior year.
- Students who may not have had leadership opportunities are encouraged to apply, and the selection process focuses on interest, commitment and potential rather than past achievements.

### **Application:**

- Students can apply with a simple application focused on what the student hopes to contribute and to get out of the experience of serving as a Youth Representative, as well as how they will share what they learn with others.
- Applicants are asked to attend a meeting of the Boards & Commissions, or civic group, for which they wish to be considered prior to being selected.
- Applications will be available by April 1<sup>st</sup> on our Youth Reps website each year.

### **Selection:**

- A broad-based Youth Representatives Recommendation Committee (YR2C), including representatives from CBC, VPIS, Falls Church Democratic and Republican Committees, along with other civic groups will review applications, interview candidates, and make recommendations to the City Council Appointments Committee & to Civic Groups.
- Applicants are recommended to achieve broad representation from City youth, and are selected based on their interest, commitment, and potential as a Youth Representative.
- The YR2C will make these recommendations to the City Council at a May council meeting.

### **CBC will also work with City Council and City staff to:**

- Provide protocols & guidelines for Boards & Commissions, as well as civic groups, based on lessons learned by the School Board.
- Conduct a workshop for Youth Representatives, Chairs of Boards & Commissions, and Presidents of civic groups each Fall to provide training and support.

**CBC Youth Reps Committee: *Nancy Brandon; Lindy Hochenberry; Julie Krachman***

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