

# **City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission**

## **Teen Town Hall 2011 Report**



**Chandler • Arizona**



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Jay Tibshraeny

## **Vice Mayor**

Trinity Donovan

## **Councilmembers**

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# **Mayor's Youth Commission 2010-11**

## **Officers**

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Amy Umaretiya, Vice Chairperson

Shengen "Katherine" Yeh, Secretary

Casey Carrigan, Historian

Jake Sullivan, Points Commissioner

## **Commission Members**

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Judy Nguyen

Arpan Patel

Jessica Pena

Mark Peng

Ilesha Sevak

Sanjay Srinivasan

Mary Sulaiman

Kevin Walberg

## **Honorary Members**

Atharva Dhole

Pooja Paode

Vivian Pham

Matt Schulter

## **Staff Liaison**

Erika Berry, Recreation Coordinator II

**The Mayor's Youth Commission would like to extend a special thanks to Chipotle, Einstein Brothers' Bagels, Fry's Food Stores and Sprout's Farmers Market for their donations used to provide breakfast and lunch, and the City of Chandler for providing the use of Tumbleweed Recreation Center for the day's activities and giveaways. These businesses and organizations allowed the Teen Town Hall event to be a success.**



# Teen Town Hall

Hosted by the  
City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission  
Thursday, April 7, 2011

## Schedule

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	<b>Arrival and Registration -</b> Cotton Room South
8:30 a.m. – 9:25 a.m.	<b>Opening Session -</b> Cotton Room North <b>Special Guest Speakers:</b> Mayor Jay Tibshraeny Sandra Rodegher Teambuilding activity
9:25 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Committee Sessions -</b> Academic Integrity – Meeting Room Activism – Ceramic Studio Environmentalism – Classroom Teen Abuse – Art Studio
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<b>Lunch (provided by Chipotle) -</b> McDowell Pavilion
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	<b>Committee Sessions Resume</b>
1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	<b>Presentations -</b> Cotton Room North
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<b>Closing Session</b>

Within the committee sessions participants will be divided into groups and given an issue that affects local teens today. Teen Town Hall aims for these groups to propose an effective plan of solution for the given issue. The recommendations will then be compiled into a report given to Mayor and Council for their consideration. Our goal is to immerse high school students in the local government action process and to expose them to issues affecting teens today and how they can create solutions for them.

**Thank you to**



**for sponsoring today's event.**

The Mayor's Youth Commission sponsored its third annual Teen Town Hall on Thursday, April 7, 2011 at the Tumbleweed Recreation Center. The purpose of the Teen Town Hall is to bring together teens from the community to discuss issues of concern to Chandler's teens and offer recommendations for practical solutions the community can implement. To ensure input from all sectors of our community, numerous private and public high schools and non-profit groups within the City of Chandler were invited to participate.

The Teen Town Hall began with Arpan Patel, a member of the Mayor's Youth Commission, welcoming the participants and then introducing Mayor Jay Tibshraeny. Mayor Tibshraeny addressed the participants, stating he was excited to see their interest and involvement in the event. He encouraged the participants to engage in the day's activities and said he looked forward to the presentation of the Teen Town Hall Report at a future City Council meeting. Mayor Tibshraeny's speech was followed by a keynote address by Mrs. Sandra Rodegher, a second year Ph.D. student at Arizona State University's School of Sustainability, studying the importance of norms in creating social movements/change for a more sustainable future. An energizing team-building activity led by Abel Mendoza, Recreation Coordinator for the City of Chandler, concluded the opening session. Participants were then divided into four committee sessions covering different topics that the Commission had chosen earlier based on last year's survey. The committee session topics included: **Academic Integrity, Activism, Environmentalism, and Teen Abuse.**

Participants met in their groups and began discussion of their assigned topics by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. The groups were then asked to focus on solutions to address the issue and develop practical recommendations that could be easily implemented in the City of Chandler.

In the closing session, a teen spokesperson from each of the discussion groups presented his/her committee's recommendations to all the Town Hall participants. Each teen presented a topic, several recommendations, how these recommendations were to be carried out, and who should implement the suggestions. These presentations provided attendees the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from each other. Justin Hacnik, a member of the Mayor's Youth Commission, closed the day by thanking all the dignitaries and participants for attending. He informed the participants that all of their day's hard work would be compiled into a report.

This Teen Town Hall report will be made available to various agencies, organizations, clubs and schools for review and is to be used as a resource in our community. The Teen Town Hall provides both teens and adults the opportunity to communicate openly with each other about important issues that affect them.

The following pages provide details on each of the four topics of discussion in this year's Teen Town Hall, as well as the specific recommendations for change created by each group.

# Academic Integrity

## Discussion Summary:

The discussion focused on what causes students to cheat on their schoolwork and the impact that rampant cheating can have on students' character and integrity. Top issues identified were the motives for cheating, how technology impacts academic integrity, and ways to stop widespread cheating in Chandler schools. The group also took special note of the crucial role technology plays in enabling cheating while also recognizing the positive role it can play to help promote academic integrity. Available resources were discussed and identified as possible recommendations to increase awareness of academic integrity. The recommendations included the creation of student-led peer mentoring programs, increased student-teacher feedback sessions, encouragement of academic integrity through advertisements, changing the grading scale so less emphasis is placed on final exams, and embracing technology to combat cheating.

## Recommendations:

### 1. Add a mentoring program at each junior high and high school in Chandler

The goal of this program is to create an environment where honors students (those with a GPA above 3.75) will help reinforce subjects with their peers. If students can learn study skills and help themselves, they will be less inclined to cheat. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would work with members of the Education and Career Action Plan Committee to create the guidelines for the mentoring program.

### 2. Add student teacher feedback sessions

Students are not always comfortable seeking out their teachers for help. To encourage open communication at school, students would be surveyed and asked for suggestions on a regular basis. This will build trust among students and teachers, allowing students to be more comfortable in seeking help. School administrators would train teachers on what questions to ask, how often to give the surveys, and how to use the information gathered to improve relationships with students. This program would be carried out by the Chandler Unified School District.

### 3. Encourage academic integrity through marketing efforts

To increase awareness about academic integrity as well as the consequences of cheating, schools could have their art and design classes create and place informative posters around their campuses. Each art and design class would be asked to create a poster about academic integrity. They would be displayed around school and entered in a schoolwide contest. Contest winners would receive a prize and their art work would be used by the school to promote academic integrity. This recommendation would be implemented by the Chandler Unified School District with local businesses donating prizes.

### 4. Change the Grade Point Average (GPA) scale

At the end of each semester, student stress increases dramatically as the pressure to do well on final exams rises. In many schools, final exams count for 20% of a student's semester grade, or the equivalent of five weeks of regular schoolwork. As such, final exams greatly affect student GPAs and provide a strong motivation to cheat. Lessening the weight of final exams in semester grades would reduce that temptation. To implement

this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would work with members of the Education and Career Action Plan Committee and restructure the GPA scale.

## **5. Embrace technology in the classroom**

To decrease the misuse of technology, teachers would integrate technology into the classroom by using media sites such as Facebook and Skype to discuss academic integrity. Students would have the opportunity to ask questions about what type of technology is or is not allowed and teachers would have the opportunity to reinforce the importance of academic integrity. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would work with each high school to come up with approved social media sites in which to have these discussions and guidelines teachers and students must follow to participate.

### **Academic Integrity**

#### **Facilitators:**

Nancy Spilsbury, Basha High School Counselor  
Claire Johnson, Mayor's Youth Commission Member  
Katherine Yeh, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

### **Teen Participants**

Yesenia Beltran, Mountain Pointe High School  
Lindsey Chew, Hamilton High School  
Chris Coffman, Chandler Early College  
Bella Cordova, El Dorado High School  
Albarosa Flores, Hamilton High School  
Dania Dowdle, Chandler High School  
Robert Garza, El Dorado High School  
Austin Granado, Chandler High School  
Marco Gurubel, Chandler High School / I.C.A.N.  
Chase Herrmann, Chandler Early College  
Zachary Hill, El Dorado High School  
Ronnie Querry, Basha High School  
Laura Rodriguez, Corona del Sol High School / Be the Change  
Alexa Rossi, Basha High School  
Julie Salcido, Basha High School  
Nick Vale, Chandler High School  
Nattanicha Wattananimitgul, Chandler High School  
Madison Worrow, Hamilton High School  
Michael Wu, Hamilton High School  
Theresa Zavala, El Dorado High School

# Activism

## **Discussion Summary:**

The group began the discussion by identifying what activism is and what forms it can take. Participants deliberated reasons for the lack of activism among teens and decided that key reasons are lack of awareness about how to get involved, laziness and lack of motivation, lack of a voice in community affairs, and lack of a known incentive to get involved. Some possible solutions for these issues may involve the creation of an activism training program, build an activism website, and hosting awareness days.

## **Recommendations:**

### **1. Activism training program**

This program would educate elementary students about community events and teach them how to be/get involved with clubs and organizations. It would be taught and organized by high school student volunteers and city recreation leaders. High school students would go to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes for a two/three day interactive workshop to teach about activism and the importance of being involved in the community. To implement this recommendation, City of Chandler Recreation staff would work with high school student volunteers.

### **2. Teen activism website**

To keep high school teens informed with up-to-date knowledge about what's going on in the city, including volunteer opportunities, a Teen Activism website would be created. The website would include a monitored forum section where students could freely share their opinions. Students would also have the ability to advertise their club, start a focus group, create a thread to share their thoughts, or market their group. The website would have a calendar of events organized by coordinators where students could see what is going on at different schools and in the city. A suggestion box would also be available for students to share their thoughts about improvements to the site or offer suggestions to make the site more effective and efficient. This website would be more than just a social networking site; it would create a community where teens, teachers and youth leaders can come and share their thoughts and information with the common goal of motivating teens to get more involved in the Chandler community. Links to this website would be available on the Chandler Unified School District main webpage, junior high and high school main and club webpages as well as the City of Chandler Teen website. This recommendation would be implemented by students with computer programming ability, Chandler Unified School District, City of Chandler Teen Recreation Coordinators, and professionals who have experience in computer programming and website design.

### **3. Awareness day**

An outside facilitator will train and teach high school students how to lead and host an activism awareness day. These awareness days will spread the importance of activism and being involved in the community. Student's opinions would be gathered so peer leaders can have an idea of what the problems are at their school and work on action plans to address the issues. The awareness day would be held in the gymnasium and all interested students could participate. To implement this recommendation, the City of Chandler and the Chandler Unified School District would work together to coordinate when and where to hold the program and who would be conducting the event. Each school would fundraise to purchase items for activities.

## **Addressing Activism**

### **Facilitators:**

Donald Smith, City of Chandler Recreation Coordinator

Brynn Douglas, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Mary Sulaiman, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

### **Youth Participants**

Andreas Alestri, Chandler High School / Boys & Girls Club

Katherine Campagna, Chandler High School

Ariana Charcas, Basha High School

Simone Colbert, Hamilton High School

Zoi Elisavitis, Chandler Early College

Gabriela Garcia, El Dorado High School

Aidan Lerew, Perry High School

Leah Orlando, Hamilton High School

Sarah Patel, Basha High School

Devraj Patel, Hamilton High School

Joseph Postiglione, Basha High School

James Sponsler, Valley Christian High School

Rae Templeton, Basha High School

Lauren Torres, Chandler High School

Josh Vasquez, El Dorado High School

Tyler Velarde, Chandler Early College

Cassandra Waggoner, El Dorado High School

# Environmentalism

## **Discussion Summary:**

This discussion group focused on the various problems concerning protecting the environment, particularly in Chandler, and what teens could do to promote conservation. Key issues identified included recycling, energy and food consumption, water conservation, citizen education and alternative transportation. The group's solutions included initiating recycling presentations, creating legislation mandating a reduction in energy consumption in schools, increasing marketing of public transportation, creating a Mayor's Environmental Commission and installing/maintaining efficient technology in public buildings.

## **Recommendations:**

### **1. Initiate recycling presentations in Chandler schools**

To raise awareness and educate students about environmentalism, school organizations would create video Public Service Announcements and presentations for their peers about the importance and ease of recycling. The videos would be a skit about how easy it is to recycle in everyday life, what is recyclable, and show the before and after environmental impacts of recycling. Each school would recognize students for recycling, put class materials online and encourage students to use refillable water bottles. This recommendation would be implemented by the Chandler Unified School District through school organizations such as environmental clubs and the sponsoring faculty.

### **2. Create legislation mandating a reduction of energy consumption in schools**

School energy consumption is high not only because lights and air are left on, but from the high cost of receiving food and other goods from businesses outside of not only Chandler, but Arizona. Energy use in schools can be reduced by turning off lights and air when space is not in use, purchasing energy efficient products, use of energy efficient light bulbs, use of motion sensor lights, and unplugging unused electronics. Schools would also reduce energy consumption by purchasing locally grown food which would allow schools access to fresh and healthy food while stimulating the local economy and reducing the carbon footprint from food transportation. To implement these energy reduction ideas in schools, the City of Chandler Mayor and Council would enact legislation that requires all Chandler schools to reduce energy use and purchase a percentage of food and goods from Arizona businesses.

### **3. Increase citizens' knowledge of public transportation**

To increase ridership on public transportation and decrease carbon emissions, a Valley-wide marketing campaign would be implemented. The purpose of the campaign would be to promote new and existing public transportation, savings to the rider, park and ride locations, and payment options. Information will be mailed out to each Chandler residence with the bus and light rail schedules and park and ride locations. To implement this recommendation, the City of Chandler Transit Division would work with other Valley cities and Valley Metro to create a campaign.

### **4. Create a Mayor's Environmental Commission**

Mayor and Council would create a Commission made up of a diverse body of individuals devoted to the advocacy of environmentalism who would identify environmental issues in

Chandler and make recommendations for solutions. A City of Chandler staff liaison would assist the Commission with its goals.

### **5. Install and maintain efficient technology in public buildings**

The City of Chandler will identify ways to decrease overall energy consumption in Chandler facilities and buildings with poor energy efficiency. The City of Chandler would then require the installation of energy-efficient technology systems in these buildings in an effort to increase energy efficiency and save money. The money would come from federal grants the City of Chandler receives. The grant money would be distributed among the businesses that apply for assistance. To implement the reduction of energy consumption in buildings, the City of Chandler Mayor and Council would enact legislation that requires building owners to install and maintain the most energy efficient technology available.

### **6. Increase water conservation in Chandler**

This recommendation would reduce water use in Chandler, raise awareness about water use, use gray water in facilities, and invest in a water conservation system for the city. To raise awareness about water use in homes, the City of Chandler will hold workshops on how to use less water in each household, the importance of maintaining and caring for appliances, and converting lawns to Xeriscape. The water conservation system would be used to monitor the amount of water used to water green areas and in time would pay for itself. Gray water would be used to water public green areas and gray water systems would be installed in city buildings to be used for toilets. To implement these solutions the City of Chandler Water Conservation Division would launch their updated conservation campaign and work with the Parks and Building and Facilities Divisions to update water systems in buildings and parks.

### **Addressing Environmentalism**

#### **Facilitators:**

P.J. Conover, City of Chandler Recreation Coordinator

Sandra Rodegher, Arizona State University PhD student and Chandler High School student teacher

Mark Peng, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Amy Umaretiya, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

#### **Youth Participants**

Anusha Abbas, Hamilton High School

Nereyda Acosta, Chandler High School

Elizabeth Bradley, Hamilton High School

Jacinda Bringas, Horizon Community Learning / Be the Change

Christopher Burke, Chandler High School

Payton Collins, Basha High School

Geoffrey Dowdle, Chandler High School

Ryleigh Fitzpatrick, Chandler High School

Tyler Hall, El Dorado High School

Brandi Martinez, Chandler Early College

Mary Nguyen, Chandler High School

Ingeet Pandya, Basha High School

Yazmine Rubio, Chandler Early College

Alexis Sanchez, El Dorado High School

Jacob Schall, Corona del Sol / Be the Change

## Teen Abuse

### **Discussion Summary:**

Group members began discussing the different kinds of teen abuse and identified key areas such as emotional, physical, sexual and neglect. The group recognized that victims of abuse often lack the recognition of abuse or motivation to get help not only for themselves but for others. Teen dating abuse and violence statistics are overwhelming; one in five teenage girls are physically and/or sexually abused. The group then focused on how to “stop the cycle” of abuse through education, training, websites and awareness days.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Facilitator training**

To develop and educate a group of teens and adults who are capable of directing workshops about teen abuse in schools and other local organizations. To implement this recommendation, City of Chandler Councilmembers, Chandler Unified School District and students would collaborate to organize trainings for the group and then the group would implement workshops.

#### **2. Teen abuse website**

Since abuse is a very sensitive subject and victims do not always know where to seek help or support, an informative website would be created. The website would be a database of the many different organizations that provide resources for victims of abuse. It would also be used as an educational tool for those who want to help someone else who they suspect is in an abusive situation. This recommendation would be implemented by an experienced web design volunteer. A link to the site would be provided on the City of Chandler teen web page.

#### **3. Awareness day/clubs**

Continued awareness to teens would be provided through Awareness Days or clubs established at each school that would outline the many different types of abuse and how they can help and protect themselves. To implement this recommendation, the Chandler Unified School District and the City of Chandler would work together to fund the awareness day/club programs and identify facilitators to host the program.

### **Addressing Teen Abuse**

#### **Facilitators:**

Tammy Clow - Kennedy, Chandler Domestic Violence Committee Chair & Summit Academy teacher

Emma Schindel, El Dorado High School Counselor

Sharae DeWitt, Mayor’s Youth Commission Member

#### **Youth Participants**

Cynthia Alvarez, Hamilton High School

Samantha Clark, Basha High School

Gustavo Cortez, El Dorado High School

Brett Daniels, Basha High School

Marcus Glabberson, El Dorado High School

Jazmin Griffin, Hamilton High School  
Brenda Gurubel, Andersen Jr. High / I.C.A.N.  
Sarah Harrison, Chandler High School  
Jerry Jiang, Hamilton High School  
Katherine Kepler Chandler High School  
Kelsey Landstrom, Mountain Point High School  
Gabriela Mako-Aponte, Basha High School  
Nikola Mathews, Chandler Early College  
Marianna Ortega, El Dorado High School  
Kiyam Pirgheybi, Hamilton High School  
Ishara Rogers, Chandler Early College  
Michael Rozinski, Basha High School  
Irene Ruan, Basha High School  
Savannah Wooten, Corona del Sol / Be the Change