



# Ten Reasons Why Youth Focused Organizations Need a Youth Decision-Making Group

Communities and society as a whole can be strengthened through youth involvement. Through engagement, youth are equipped to become more active in their roles as citizens. Additionally, youth involvement can lead to reduced conflict and mistrust of young people by adults through reducing negative stereotypes. The following list gives more information on why young people should be involved in organizational decision-making.

## 10. Youth voice becomes part of the organizational structure

Two heads are better than one, and this applies to youth too. Having a youth decision-making group means that there is a youth opinion only a phone call or an e-mail away.

## 9. Broaden your audience and your organization

By making a youth decision-making group part of your team you can begin to understand what draws youth to service, consuming certain items, etc. What better way to involve youth than through other youth? Simply by incorporating youth voice into your planning process and programming, your organization will become more diverse.

## 8. A breath of fresh air

Youth are known to think “out of the box” and can give your organization fresh perspectives and ideas. Youth views also tend to breakdown and squeeze around barriers.

## 7. Youth motivate youth (and others)

Having a group of young people within the organizational structure shows “youth friendliness” and a commitment to young people. Also: Youth are excitement! Their energy and idealism spreads like wildfire. Youth have the power to mobilize and motivate others.

## 6. Youth ARE Decision-Makers

Youth are making informed decisions that affect others in communities across the country. Youth tend to use consensus building skills in making decisions as a group. This method of decision-making allows for every voice to be heard.

## 5. Youth can spread the word

Young people can serve as motivators for current and new programs developed by an organization, spreading information about events and activities through word-of-mouth and self participation.

THESE 5 REASONS

#### **4. Youth are willing to work**

Some service organizations may participate in project that does not seem fun to adults, or too menial for them. Youth are willing to participate and work to benefit others. Many youth like to work with friends; this enables the job to be more fun and productive.

#### **3. Youth will add more support and awareness**

Through young people, word of your cause could be spread far and wide. Youth also can aid your organization's cause by speaking and promotion.

#### **2. Youthful influence can ease tension when times get tough**

Every adult wishes to go back in time to when they were young. Having youth in your group enables the atmosphere to be relaxed and carefree, yet serious. When times become stressful many youth are able to lighten the mood.

#### **1. If youth are a part of the organization now they will continue to serve**

Including youth now will ensure that the organization is being placed in good hands down the road. With a jump start on youth activity, they will understand their role in the group and will be better prepared for their potential roles as adult leaders.

Adapted from: Zeldin, S., et. al. (2000). *Youth In Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations*. Madison, WI: National 4-H Council, University of Wisconsin Extension.