

REPORT OF WELLESLEY YOUTH COMMISSION

About the Youth Commission

The Wellesley Youth Commission provides programs and services designed to ensure that Wellesley's youth feel they are a valued part of the Wellesley community. By providing a wide variety of community-based events, programs and services, the Youth Commission strives to appeal to and meet the needs of a broad spectrum of middle and high school age youth.

The vision of the Wellesley Youth Commission is to educate and support youth and their families in making informed and healthy decisions.

Youth Commission board members for Fiscal Year 2014 were: Chair: Lesley Robertson, Members: Beth Falk, Trina Foster, Michael Kiernan, Erin Reilly, Officer Evan Rosenberg and Ellen Scott. The Youth Commission's professional staff consists of Youth Director, Maura Renzella. The Youth Director's office is located at the Wellesley Town Hall, 525 Washington Street.

Programs and Services

Programs offered by the Youth Commission in fiscal year 2014 included:

Harm reduction programs for Wellesley Public Schools for 5th, 6th, 8th, and 10th grade students. The Youth Commission offers various programs through the seven elementary schools, Wellesley Middle and High School. In the 5th grade the Wellesley Youth Commission in collaboration with the Wellesley Police Department facilitates a 5 week program entitled P.R.I.D.E. (Partnership, Responsibility, Independence, Decisions and Education). Internet safety and Cyberbullying are covered in the 6th grade, an introduction to the consequences of underage drinking and healthy and unhealthy teen relationships is covered in the 8th grade, and a more intensive discussion on how to make healthy choices and direct and indirect consequences regarding underage drinking is followed up again in the 10th grade. All programs are in collaboration with both Wellesley Police and Fire Departments.

Teens Against Drinking and Driving (TADD) is a Wellesley High School (WHS) club co-advised by the Wellesley Youth Director and the WHS Outreach Counselor from Human Relations Service, Inc. TADD focuses on raising awareness within the WHS community on issues such as alcohol and the consequences of drinking and driving.

Wellesley Fire Rescuers Summer Program is an educational and service learning-based summer program for middle school aged youth collaboratively managed by the Wellesley Youth Commission and the Wellesley Fire Department. Participants find out about careers in fire and public safety and learning basic components of first aid and fire prevention. In addition, the program strives to foster positive relationships between fire service personnel and local youth.

Wellesley Media Summer Program is a summer exploration opportunity for middle school students with WCAC TV. Highlights for this program include: learning the

art of program planning; learning to operate WCAC TV studio equipment including: cameras, audio, and editing devices; gaining the skills to produce a public service announcement or news piece for WCAC TV; and a field trip to a local television studio.

Wellesley Police Youth Academy is an educational and learning-based summer program for middle school age youth collaboratively managed by the Wellesley Youth Commission and the Wellesley Police Department. Participants spend a week with Wellesley police personnel where they gain a valuable perspective on the importance of law enforcement with-in their community. While learning about law enforcement careers, Academy attendees will also get to know local police officers.

Wellesley High School Work Study Program is a joint venture between A Path In The Woods Foundation, Inc. through A Path in the Woods Fund of the Foundation for MetroWest, Wellesley High School, the Wellesley Youth Commission and the Town of Wellesley. The program provides employment opportunities and job skill training within the Town of Wellesley departments to qualified high school students. The program is designed to provide job exposure to students who express an interest in entering the workforce directly after high school and who have been approved for the program by the Guidance Department and the Youth Commission.

Wellesley Employment Program- is the Youth Commission's Employment Program which makes it easy for local youth (ages 14+) interested in part-time and/or seasonal employment to get information about job opportunities at area businesses and organizations. If interested, youth can visit www.wellesleyyouthjobs.com and view available positions on our online job-posting page. The Wellesley Youth Commission does not screen applicants or employers involved with the Employment Program.

Wellesley High School- Key Club is co-advised by the Youth Director at Wellesley High School. The goal of the WHS Key Club is to improve our community through dedication to community service. We offer a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to Wellesley High School Students.

Impact Programs for Wellesley Middle School Aged Youth is a unique personal safety and self-defense curriculum that teaches students effective strategies to resist threats, intimidation and violence perpetrated by strangers and people they know. Classes are taught by a team of two instructors, one of whom takes on the role of a perpetrator. He wears a full suit of body armor so students can safely defend themselves using the same force needed in a real attack.

Service Learning Opportunities avails youth opportunities to work on projects in the community to gain leadership skills while also gaining a sense of their community. Examples of those opportunities are: WHS Senior Project, Program Assistants for our Summer Programs, or connecting youth with local businesses for internship.

Community Service Opportunities (court-ordered or other) avails youth a connection with local organizations looking for volunteers, and working with these youth to ensure an invaluable experience. Opportunities can be found on www.wellesleyyouthjobs.com or www.wellesleyvolunteers.org.