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Local Students Win Statewide Community Service Contest

Five Municipal Youth Councils recognized for volunteer service projects

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TALLAHASSEE – Five municipal youth councils from cities throughout Florida recently won a statewide community service contest.

The 2019 Municipal Youth Council Community Service Contest, sponsored by the Florida League of Cities, showcases community service projects performed by municipal youth councils that successfully address specific needs in their local communities. Comprised of high school students within the city, municipal youth councils are special councils that typically serve as an advisory board to the local government. They are sometimes referred to as youth corps, teen advisory boards or mayor's youth councils.

“Based on what we’ve seen from municipal youth councils throughout Florida, our future lies in good hands,” said Florida League of Cities President and Bartow Mayor Leo E. Longworth. “These students bring energy and innovative ideas to improve our communities. On behalf of elected officials across the state, I congratulate their efforts and look forward to feeling their positive impact for years to come.”

This year’s contest winners and their projects are:

- **City of Boca Raton Community Advisory Panel Youth Subcommittee** – *“LEAD Green”*
- **City of Haines City Youth Advisory Council** – *“Boys & Girls Club Revitalization”*
- **City of Homestead Mayor’s Youth Council** – *“Government Shutdown Relief Project”*
- **City of West Palm Beach Mayor’s Youth Council** – *“Speak Your Mind”*
- **City of West Park Youth Council** – *“Shoebox for the Homeless”*

The **“LEAD Green”** project from the **City of Boca Raton Community Advisory Panel Youth Subcommittee** is a new initiative that empowers and encourages young volunteer groups from different schools throughout the city to collaborate and work together. Their efforts have resulted in several environmental projects across the city including planting trees, rehabilitating nature trails and performing beach cleanups. The goal of **“LEAD”** is to preserve the environment for future generations, make positive contributions to the City of Boca Raton and its communities, and to raise awareness among residents.

The **“Boys & Girls Club Revitalization”** project from the **City of Haines City Youth Advisory Council** was focused on renovating the Dolphus Howard Building, home to the Citrus Center Boys & Girls Club. The youth council worked to clean up and paint both the interior and exterior of the building before adding the final touches on the inside including new games, furniture and electronics for members of the Boys & Girls Club to use.

The **“Government Shutdown Relief Project”** from the **City of Homestead Mayor’s Youth Council** focused on helping those residents of Homestead who were affected by the shutdown of the federal government. Members of the youth council collected donations of food and everyday necessities such as laundry detergent and toiletries. Those items were then dispensed to residents in need.

The **“Speak Your Mind”** project from the **City of West Palm Beach Mayor’s Youth Council** was a town hall event created by students for students. For the event, the council invited a panel of psychologists, therapists, school administrators and the city’s police chief. Students from schools throughout the city were also invited to participate. The goal of the event was to discuss topics such as mental health and school safety and to create an atmosphere in which students could voice their concerns and have their questions answered.

The **“Shoebox for the Homeless”** project from the **City of West Park Youth Council** focused on helping the homeless population within the city. It was created after members of the council noticed an increase in their city’s homeless population. Members filled shoeboxes with toiletries and staple food items, which they then delivered to their city’s police station, which partnered with them for the project. Deputies kept the boxes in their trunks and handed them out to those in need on behalf of the youth council.

Contest winners will receive a trophy, be recognized at the League’s Annual Conference, be featured in the League’s statewide publication, *Quality Cities (QC)* magazine, and have their projects featured on the League’s website and social media accounts.

Information on the winning projects is available at flcities.com/YCPhotoWinners

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Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida’s cities. Florida’s cities are formed by their citizens and governed by their citizens. The League is founded on the belief that local self-government is the keystone of American democracy. For more information, visit floridaleagueofcities.com.