

Fund Development



While the ultimate goal is to create an endowed youth fund at the community foundation that a YAC can oversee, youth grantmaking can be accomplished with as little as \$15,000 a year. As the Kellogg Challenge was being implemented in Michigan, youth grantmakers in a number of communities realized that they needed to raise funds for immediate grantmaking as well as help the community foundation raise endowment funds to meet the Kellogg Challenge.

Several YACs conducted their own fundraising events, such as operating a concession stand at community events (i.e., athletic events and parades) or holding a car wash. Successful in generating small amounts of money for the YAC, they also had a positive payoff in raising the visibility of the community foundation as being a leader in partnering with youth. Other YACs have been successful in being adopted by local service clubs.

If the YAC wants to do a fund-raising event, help the members develop a business plan for an activity that is guaranteed to at least break even. The YACs that have been most successful have chosen events that are part of other activities, such as operating a concession stand at a sporting event. In reviewing the business plan, YAC members should discuss the feasibility of doing the event again, whether it be annually or several times in one season. Make sure that there is a debriefing session after the event to evaluate its success in reaching the goals set forth in the business plan.

It is important to distinguish between the roles the YAC plays as fundraiser versus fund developer. While a YAC, with the support of the advisor and foundation staff, may execute a fund-raising event, YAC members play a supportive role in helping foundation staff and trustees implement their campaign for an endowed youth fund.

Member involvement usually takes place in three ways:

- Teaming with foundation staff and trustees to visit individual past and prospective donors
- Teaming with foundation staff and trustees to make group presentations
- Assisting the foundation with special events

Not all YAC members are ideally suited to participate in these activities, just as not all foundation board members are oriented to do fund development. However, those members that have participated in such activities have cited three direct benefits:

- Increased knowledge of their community
- Increased understanding of the value of philanthropy
- Increased self-confidence that stems from the opportunity to make public presentations

Linking youth to fund development efforts can help community foundations increase their assets. As one community foundation donor said, "it is hard to say no to these articulate youth."

The following suggestions are offered for community foundation staff and boards:

- Establish an endowment goal for the Youth Fund and share your goal and plan with the YAC. Let members know that the foundation is committed to growing this fund—even if it takes several years.
- Invite members of the YAC to participate in donor calls, group presentations and foundation special events. In group presentations to service clubs, foundation staff will often take several YAC members as representatives, although only one or two members may be involved in the presentation itself.
- Have one or two YAC members comfortable enough to speak for two or three minutes without reading prepared remarks. During training have each YAC member write what they think is most important about the YAC to them and have them rehearse it several times with each other before making a presentation to the group. As part of the rehearsal, discuss the “unexpected question.”
A well-prepared YAC member can refer the question to the staff or trustee accompanying them or indicate that they will get back to the individual with the answer.

Other points for YAC members to make in a presentation include: who the members of the YAC are, what are the key youth issues the YAC is focusing on, and one or two examples of grants.

- YAC members can be involved in making the appointment when soliciting individuals at their places of business. Help them develop their phone message, clearly stating the reason for the requested meeting.
- Making “the ask” with both individuals and groups can be an exciting moment. One successful approach is to have the YAC member make the initial request for support. Then the staff member may reinforce the request by suggesting a specific amount.
- Obtain the parents’ written permission if a donor visit or group presentation involves taking the youth out of school and transporting the youth. For evening meetings, invite parents to bring their youth and stay for the presentation - an opportunity for parents to learn more about the YAC.
- Have the YAC member join you in writing a letter of confirmation to the donor or group accompanying the foundation’s annual report, which features the YAC’s grants. The same member should join you in sending a thank you letter.
- Send the YAC member a thank-you letter for their efforts. This letter can be added to their portfolio on community service.



Youth Grantmakers Contribute to Community Foundation Growth, by Karin Tice is a helpful resource to build on these suggestions.