

2014-15 York County Youth Commission (YCYC)
1st Quarterly Report to the Board of Supervisors
Oct., 21, 2014
Kristyn Gatling, Chairman

(1-Title) Good evening Mr. Chairman, members of the Board and my fellow citizens...especially the youth of York County. This school year's York County Youth Commission, or YCYC for short, began with a 2-day orientation in August. The first day we met at the Tabb Library and began by receiving welcoming remarks and words of wisdom, inspiration and challenge from County and School officials. We would like to publicly thank all of them for coming and taking time from their busy schedules to encourage us at the start of our service this year. They included: Mrs. Noll, our Board of Supervisor representative who attends our monthly meetings; Ms. Vivian Calkins-McGettigan, the Deputy County Administrator; and, Mr. Manuel Dillard, the Associate Director of School Administration with the York County School Division. **(2-Mr. McReynolds)** Also present that morning to greet us was Mr. James McReynolds, shown here talking with members of the YCYC last year during one of their monthly meetings. As County Administrator he welcomed many youth commissioners over the years during their orientation. We were looking forward to him coming to speak to us more in depth at one of our monthly meetings later this year. **(3-Mr. McReynolds)** We are very saddened by his loss and are grateful for the genuine interest and concern he had for the county's youth. And, we are joining many others in especially remembering his family during this very difficult time.

(4-Mrs. Noll) Following a brief meet and greet session with the officials who greeted us, we began our orientation training sessions. Mrs. Noll stayed to lead off the day with an interesting group discussion on the principles and qualities of a good leader. **(5-Ms. Coleman)** We were

also thankful that Ms. Laurie Coleman, Director of the York County Dept. of Community Services, came to lead an informative session entitled, “York County Government 101,” where we received an overview of the County’s geography, population, local government operations and responsibilities. **(6-Mr. Fuller)** Mr. Brian Fuller, Manager of the County’s division of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, also came, and we appreciated him discussing some of the major components in planning and hosting a special event.

(7-Ms. McMullen) Later that day we had a variety of other sessions including a review of the Commission’s bylaws and our primary mission of representing student issues and ideas to the Board of Supervisors and sharing input with school officials as well. Additionally, our Staff Assistant, Ms. Lynne McMullen, gave each of us a brief personality test to determine some of our major personality traits and led a discussion focusing on how the diversity of traits we represent could be helpful as we work together this year in reaching out to our peers and the wide variety of personalities, backgrounds and interests they represent.

(8-Taylor) We were also glad that one of last year’s Youth Commission officers spoke to us. Former YCYC Secretary Taylor Hogge discussed her personal experience in administering YCYC-sponsored Cafeteria Mini Surveys last year at Tabb High. It was encouraging to hear her talk of their success and how some commissioners learned the importance of being willing to step out of their comfort zones and walk directly up to lunch tables to ask if students would like to participate in a brief survey.

(9-Brainstroming Group Reporting) That afternoon at the Tabb Library we divided into three brainstorming groups and spent some time discussing the topic of bullying and how best to inform students, reduce the frequency of bullying and help support victims. Amazingly, as each group presented their ideas, we realized that each one came up with completely different

approaches in how to address this issue. We spent additional time discussing this in our separate sub-committee meetings this month and plan to make it the highlight of our upcoming November monthly meeting as well.

(10-Wall/Tire/Jump Rope) The 2nd day of orientation we met again for a teambuilding session at the Hampton Roads Academy Challenge Course. We started off with a few problem solving exercises in which we all had to put our heads together to come up with the solution.

(11-Ropes/Zip line) We also were able to go up on HRA's Ropes Course. While the course was both terrifying and challenging, it was also exhilarating. And, as a result, we had ample opportunity to encourage one another! It is an amazing experience to come together from different high schools and as much as 25 miles between us and really bond together so quickly.

(12-Wall & sign) Most of us were strangers when we began in August. But by the end of the 2nd day of orientation we had a real sense of friendship and community. Best of all, it gave us the opportunity to know each other better, learn about our collective strengths and weaknesses, and really begin to mesh as a team.

(13-Title/3 Committees) Since our late August orientation sessions, the full Youth Commission has had two regular monthly meetings. At our September meeting we elected officers for the year, including Connor Pittman serving as our Vice Chairman and Alex Zhou as our Secretary. We also finished forming our three committees for the year, each of which holds its own monthly meetings. After each Committee met at least once in September, they all reported back to the full commission at our October monthly meeting with the full commission. This year the **Public Relations Committee** is planning to continue publicizing the Commission's activities and initiatives in a variety of ways including our website, school announcements and

emails, fliers in local businesses and press releases. On a personal level, we also plan to purchase t-shirts our Public Relations committee is designing to wear in school.

Our **Special Projects Committee** focuses on service activities for the Commission and organizes countywide social events that provide opportunities to bring students from across the county together. This committee is already working on a charitable event for the spring.

The **Student Relations Committee** has been busy looking at last year's survey results on bullying and devising some follow-up questions for students to answer this year. We hope to launch the first mini-survey of the year in late November. We are again planning to work with each school's National Honor Society in conducting these surveys and also in soliciting student input for future questions and items of widespread concern.

(14-VoteTeen VA) Earlier this month the Commission sponsored the "VoteTeen Virginia" promotion, which began years ago at the suggestion of a former Youth Commissioner. An informational flier was sent to the high schools to be presented to all seniors in their Government or English classes. It encouraged 18-year olds to register to vote for the upcoming election on November 4th. We hope it encouraged ALL seniors, regardless of their age, to exercise this most important right and civic responsibility once they are eligible to vote. We are grateful for the assistance of County Registrar Mr. Walt Latham and his staff for their assistance in checking and revising this flier for this year's election.

(15-Yortown Day) Finally, this past Sunday, October 19th, the Youth Commission helped to commemorate Yorktown Day by passing out programs and flags before the parade that afternoon.

(16-Title w/website) Mr. Chairman, in closing, we would like to thank you and the Board of Supervisors for giving us this time to report to you and our fellow citizens and peers tonight.