

# YOUTH VOICE

**Educate. Motivate. Participate.**

*A Force for Positive Change*

## ■ Quick YOUTH VOICE Facts

- Youth Voice was founded on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.
- Youth Voice started as a Northern Nevada nonprofit organization.
- Youth Voice is run completely by young leaders and volunteers aged 25 and under.
- In fact, the bylaws require leaders to resign as soon as they turn 26 years old. This keeps the organization always in touch with the youth.
- Youth Voice is now represented in 5 states across the country and continues to expand—Nevada, California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. all have Youth Voice board members and volunteers. The entire East Coast is preparing to launch onto the public stage this coming fall in Philadelphia.
- Youth Voice has a total of 14 directors and over 50 volunteers on our various committees, and we're quickly growing.
- Youth Voice's mission is: To help young people become active, vocal and responsible members of American society by providing a non-partisan forum to promote and foster a culture of civic engagement.

## ■ What does Youth Voice do?

- We host all kinds of events that allow young people to become more active in our society.
- Last fall we hosted a debate at UNR between the two candidates for Governor, Dina Titus and Jim Gibbons. We were proud to have over 600 young people come support the event.
- We also hosted a debate for the Carson City School Board.
- We host high school focused events like State Government Day where we try to give students access to the realities of public service.
- VOICE THE VOTE: On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 we were proud to commence Voice the Vote, Youth Voice's national voter registration drive. We are trying to register as many young voters across the country as possible before the 2008 election.
- VOICES OF THE FUTURE: Youth Voice is raising money for a scholarship fund called Voices of the Future: Young Citizens of America Scholarship Fund. This fund will support essay contests with scholarship prizes around the country for young people of all ages.
- Later this Spring and into the Summer Youth Voice is planning on working with all of the presidential candidates to provide forums where young voters can engage with them in person. We've had some great movement in talking with Barack Obama and Bill Richardson, and we will reach out to all candidates and keep our efforts non-partisan.
- We are also forming a partnership with the Youth Leadership Initiative out of the Center For Politics at the University of Virginia. We'll be bringing Voice the Vote to their Mock Constitutional Convention in Washington D.C. this coming fall.

## ■ How is Youth Voice Different than Other Youth Groups?

- We are the only national non-profit organization run completely by young leaders aged 25 and under, as mandated by our Bylaws.
- We are also strictly nonpartisan, which is very rare among youth organizations.
- Our main aim is to educate young voters about the importance of civic involvement and then motivate them to participate actively in our society at all levels. That's why our slogan is, "Educate. Motivate. Participate."
- We are not just a political organization, either. We're currently in the process of creating a community service initiative which educates youth about the importance of community involvement and provides them with opportunities to contribute.
- We are also a mobile organization which doesn't keep an office. All of our leaders have lives outside of the organization and serve voluntarily in their free time.
- We also have an Advisory Board of adult leaders around the nation and world who serve as mentors for our current leadership when they need advice on various matters concerning the organization.

## ■ Why Does Youth Voice Exist?

- America was founded on the principle of everyone being an active player in society.
- Today, our society is becoming increasingly apathetic, and a smaller and smaller contingent of people are influencing the direction of our communities, cities, states and country.
- Youth Voice believes America is best when all people can participate in making informed political decisions. We seek to reverse the current trend by tapping into the wonderful potential of America's youth. By creating a mentality in which civic involvement is a virtue, we can

ensure the survival of the democratic ideals that have brought us so much success thus far.

- The Pie Chart: Some young people ask if their participation will make a difference. Consider this: In 2004, there were 225 million adults who were eligible to vote. Only 120 million of them actually voted. That's just over half of all adults—that's pretty scary. What's even more disturbing is the fact that only about ¼ of all adults were needed to win the election and take this country in any given direction. And that election was considered GREAT in terms of turnout. This is not democratic, and it's time to turn the trend around.
- Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about this in *Democracy in America* and he warned that one of the greatest dangers facing America would come from within. Over time, as people participate less and less, the power of society begins slowly resting in fewer and fewer hands, and one day the country could suddenly wake up in the middle of oppression—at which point it's too late.

## ■ Our Goals

- To provide nonpartisan venues in which youth can interact with elected officials and leaders in the community
- To encourage informed, active civic participation
- To increase civic awareness
- To promote a culture of civic virtue
- To provide a non-partisan forum for debate and constructive discussion
- To increase voter registration numbers and turnout among young voters

## ■ NO AGENDA

- Youth Voice in no way espouses any agenda or ideology, nor does it seek to influence the political beliefs of any of its members.

## ■ How we Implement our Goals

- Dynamic **youth outreach program** at local high schools
- Organized debates
- Guest speakers
- Get out the vote events
- Community Service Initiatives
- Voter Registration Drives

## ■ Upcoming Events

- VOICE THE VOTE—National Voter Registration Drive
- Presidential Voice the Vote Circuit. Youth Voice is trying to host various presidential candidates at venues across the nation to give young people firsthand access to our leaders.
- October, Mock Constitutional Convention in Washington D.C. with the Youth Leadership Initiative
- High School Workshop in the fall

## ■ HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

- Visit our website at [www.youthvoiceinc.org](http://www.youthvoiceinc.org) and then send an email to [info@youthvoiceinc.org](mailto:info@youthvoiceinc.org). Let us know where your interests lie.
- We are always looking for volunteers to help with our various events and initiatives. It's a great way to get community service credit, meet influential adults around our nation and obtain valuable leadership experience.
- You also will have a lot of fun and meets some fantastic young leaders.

## **The Youth Voice Directors for 2006-2007**

Ryan Costella, Chief Executive Officer

Kaja Odegard, Secretary

Joe Lynn, Chief Financial Officer

Araceli Madera, Director of Fundraising

Erin Smith, Director of Development

Andrew Pederson, Director of Media Relations

Greg Bailor, Community Outreach Director

Aron Schnaser, Director of Community Service

Danielle Costella, Events Coordinator

Oscar Abello, Director of East Coast Affairs

Amber Cleveland, Co-Director of Midwest Affairs

Abbey Gardner, Director of Election Affairs

Joey Hurzel, Director of Las Vegas Operations

Heather Costella, Director High School Operations