

## **City of Parkland Youth Ambassador Program**

The City of Parkland Youth Ambassador Program is to be comprised of a group of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who reside in the City of Parkland. Students will have the opportunity to partner with the Mayor and City Commissioners as well as work with the City Manager's Office.

The goal of the Parkland Youth Ambassador Program is to foster open and positive communication between City government and the youth of our community. Students serve as liaisons and discuss youth-related issues that impact the community and its schools while learning and participating in their local municipal government. Ideally, the Youth Ambassadors will utilize a variety of methods, including social media, to focus on topics that affect young people today such as drug and alcohol education, underage drinking and driving, anti-bullying campaigns, mental health awareness, and voter awareness. In addition, the students will regularly attend City Commission meetings (including budget hearings), learn about various City departments, volunteer at City events, and assist with service projects to benefit other organizations.

The Parkland Youth Ambassador Program will help connect Parkland's youth with city government. In addition, the Youth Ambassadors will be offered insight and guidance from City leaders should they choose to follow a career path in the field of public service.

### **Vision:**

To encourage active citizenship and community involvement to deepen commitment to civic engagement from the public service leaders of tomorrow.

### **Mission:**

- To provide a path of meaningful and reciprocal communication between the youth of the City of Parkland and the City's leaders;
- To provide youth with an understanding of the innerworkings of municipal government
- To cultivate a sense of civic responsibility and public service;
- To encourage and develop effective leadership skills;
- To provide real-world opportunities for active community service in the City of Parkland;
- To acknowledge the civic involvement and contributions of the youth of the City of Parkland;
- To foster open discussion and seek feedback regarding contemporary issues affecting the positive development of the youth of the City of Parkland.

**Guidelines:**

- The Parkland Youth Ambassador Program will be a one-year program comprised of five (5) students whose primary residence is within the City of Parkland.
- To participate, students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, maintain satisfactory conduct within their school, and must be a citizen in good standing for the duration of the program.
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are encouraged to apply during the school year for participation beginning in the summer prior to their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- Students will be required to write a minimum 300-word essay detailing the impact and importance of local government on the social fabric of the Parkland community.
- Students should aspire to assist the City of Parkland in its growth and desire to become a more dynamic and innovative City.
- Students must be involved in community service initiatives.
- Students should be eager to represent their peers to the Mayor, City Commission, Law Enforcement, and other City leaders.
- Students are required to attend every Youth Ambassador meeting. In an emergency situation, virtual attendance may be permitted.

**Member Selection:**

- Program materials will be sent to each high school principal.
- All students must provide at least one letter of recommendation from their school and at least one from a community member who is not a relative.
- The applicants will then be presented to the City of Parkland's Community Advisory Board who will then make final selections.
- Students and parents/guardians will be asked to sign participation authorization forms.

**Scholarship:**

- Parkland Youth Ambassadors will each be eligible to receive a Parkland Youth Ambassador Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500. In order to qualify for the scholarship, participants must meet all requirements of the program.
- After the completion of the program, Ambassadors will be recognized at a City Commission meeting at which scholarships will be awarded and each participant will receive a letter of commendation from the Mayor of Parkland.

**Service Hours:**

- Students will be granted 10 community service hours per month for the duration of the program.
- Students should commit to volunteer hours for which they have obligated themselves. In an emergency situation, cancellations for volunteer opportunities must be rescheduled or service hours will not be granted.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Attend orientation and training.
- Identify issues affecting the youth of the City of Parkland.
- Establish goals, work plans, and budgets to address youth concerns. Work plan must be completed and implemented by the end of the program.
- Prepare reports and make presentations to the Mayor and City Commissioners on the group's activities.
- Participate in City/community events and attend City meetings as assigned, which may include:
  - Regular City Commission meetings
  - Budget Hearings
  - Government Day
- Select officers – President, Vice-President, Secretary.
- Hold one (1) regular monthly Youth Ambassador meeting to gather input from peers and constituents.
- Work with City Clerk's office to create agendas and maintain minutes of all meetings noting attendance and issues addressed. Agendas and minutes to be provided to City staff.
- Serve as role models to their peers.
- Provide resources for youth-oriented programs and projects.
- Maintain professional and dignified behavior while serving as a Youth Ambassador, showing proper respect and exhibiting orderly conduct at all times.
- Parkland Youth Ambassador Program approved attire and insignia must be worn to all meetings and events in the community. Dress shall be business casual. Certain specific attire will be provided by the City.
- Coordinate with other local and national youth organizations as necessary.

By participating in this program, the following are some of the many things you will experience and learn.

- City history, organizational structure, and administrative processes;
- municipal policy and budget development;

- leadership development and productivity improvement;
- conflict resolution in the public sector;
- public speaking.

**Activities:**

- The Parkland Youth Ambassadors will utilize a variety of methods to focus on topics that affect young people today such as drug & alcohol education, underage drinking and driving, anti-bullying campaigns, mental health awareness, and voter awareness.
- Activities that will provide hands-on leadership development and training with special emphasis on highlighting the innerworkings of government.
- Meet with Mayor and/or Commissioners to provide status updates as necessary.
- Youth Ambassador designated project – a project chosen by the Parkland Youth Ambassadors which explores relevant, conceptual research and policy issues, to be presented to Commission at a designated Commission meeting at the conclusion of the program.
- Tour various City departments and facilities and receive information about their functions and operation in the City.
- Participate in various events held by the City to provide assistance and give back to the community (i.e., *“Light up the Park”*, ribbon cuttings, *“Relay for Life”*, etc.).