

Orange County Community Foundation Youth Council Overview

The Orange County Community Foundation Youth Council was formed in 2002 with a vision of developing philanthropy and commitment to the community among Orange County youth. The Youth Council consists of members representing grade eight through twelve from the three Orange County School districts. Community leaders and a staff coordinator serve as adult mentors to Youth Council members.

One of the main goals of these young philanthropists is to improve the quality of life to citizens in Orange County. Facilitating monthly meetings and actively giving back to their county, one of the biggest projects they undertake is the “Youth as Philanthropists” education series. The focus is to teach philanthropy to elementary students and help them to realize the long-term effect of what they can accomplish by helping others and their community. Along with community programs, Youth Council members are committed to increasing the endowment of their own fund to provide grants to their community. The members participate in various fundraisers throughout the year that help to raise their endowment and philanthropic awareness.

By empowering Orange County youth, we hope to see three goals ultimately realized. First, that we cause positive change in community by changing their multi-generational attitude of “I can’t make a difference.” Secondly, by introducing philanthropy and the Community Foundation to fourth graders, we believe they will have a greater interest in the Youth Council as high school students. Finally, these same students, as adults, will already possess a greater understanding of Orange County and of the Community Foundation; therefore, preparing them to become board members that will lead the Foundation well into the future.

Through this journey, the Orange County Youth Council has surpassed the expectations of the original vision, becoming active philanthropists who are making a difference and educating the community, and along the way, realizing their collective potential through youth perspective. These students are most certainly examples of what being a philanthropist means.