

2024 Texas Youth Advisory Commission Summit

By **Tamara Miller, M.S.**, Human Resources Training and Equity Manager, City of Lewisville



The Annual Texas Youth Advisory Commission (YAC) Summit is a two-day statewide event sponsored by the Texas Municipal League (TML). This year's Summit was hosted by the City of Lewisville and its Youth Action Council on February 2-4. The mission of the YAC Summit is to educate, inspire, and empower as well as promote a fun environment for youth and city leaders to learn from and work with each other.

The Lewisville Youth Action Council (LYAC) is made up of exceptional young service leaders that advise the city council on youth-related issues; assist with special projects and events; and research, assess, and evaluate existing youth and community programs. They also help design and plan new youth events and activities to encourage youth involvement in the community; serve as ambassadors for their peers; and inspire other young people by completing service projects and sharing their stories.

Each year, the LYAC learns about City of Lewisville operations

and youth involvement in the community. The group also works on a community service project. Past projects have included creating a little food pantry and planting trees. This year, the group was presented with the opportunity to host the annual YAC Summit which is hosted by a different Texas city each year. The LYAC gladly accepted the challenge of hosting the summit for the first time in Lewisville.

The LYAC, with their advisors and support from TML, worked together for months organizing the Summit. The goal was to plan an educational and motivational event with a fun environment so that attendees left telling others about the great experience they had in Lewisville. The group collaborated on all Summit details including the programming, activities, and speakers.

The event started with a Friday night social at iCompete Experience in Lewisville. iCompete Experience is a fully immersive "active sports eatertainment" concept that is a convergence of e-sports, augmented reality, simulation,



and immersive technology. The summit attendees enjoyed augmented reality golf, batting cage simulators, digitally-scored darts, axe-throwing, and immersive-tech billiards. They also enjoyed a taco bar and desserts catered by the venue.

The main program kicked off Saturday with breakfast and a welcome by the LYAC. The group was also greeted by Lewisville Mayor TJ Gilmore. The keynote presentation was presented by Cameron Dockery, youth motivational speaker and a former LYAC member. Cameron gave a motivational presentation about Standing on Business. This presentation included inspiration, audience interaction, and practical application. Cameron engaged the audience from the perspective of a young adult, but also as a former youth action council member and how his experience played a vital role in his growth and development.

Michael Ford, a youth motivational speaker, presented the general session on public speaking. In this session, attendees learned the basics of public speaking and how to become a more confident public speaker. Michael talked about his own personal experiences to demonstrate public speaking and to connect with the audience.

The first workshop was presented by Mary Jacoby from Denton Area Credit Union on the topic "Money Basics for Teens." This workshop was designed to answer questions that included: Do I need a checking account? How are debit and credit cards different? What's a credit score? Mary helped facilitate this session to answer these questions

and helped teens become more money-wise. The next workshop was focused on networking. Southern Methodist University Law Student Madison Lopez Green presented this session. It was filled with tips on networking, interacting, and engaging with others to make connections and build relationships.

The LYAC also built time into the program for each Texas youth group to present updates on projects and initiatives. This session gave the groups an opportunity to share their experiences of their programs and the positive impact the programs have had locally. The program concluded with a highly interactive networking game led by the Boys & Girls Club of Denton County. The Boys & Girls Club supported the Summit throughout the day by creating a club inside the conference hotel that included arts and crafts, video games, and creative spaces. Saturday night concluded with a social at Thrive Recreational Center. Attendees enjoyed indoor swimming, games, arts and crafts, interactive photo booth, and a barbeque food truck.

The Summit wrapped up Sunday with a group activity led by the LYAC and their advisors, a video presentation created by LYAC member Joshua Chon, and many photo ops. It took a lot of hard work and collaboration, but the LYAC created a unique, fun, educational, and motivational experience for all attendees! ★

