

County swears in Youth in Governance members

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For Kate Gerou, spending two years in Kenosha County's Youth in Governance program gave her insights of how decisions are made and how local government works.

Moreover, Gerou said, it educated her on how people interact.

"It's always interesting to see people working together," said Gerou, a soon-to-graduate Central High School senior who is headed off to college this fall at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Gerou is one of the outgoing members of Youth in Governance, which swore in its sixth class of participants last week.

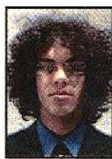
Work with county panels

The program, a function of the Kenosha County University of Wisconsin-Extension, allows high school students from across the county the opportunity to listen and participate in debates as advisory members of the County Board's six standing committees and the Kenosha Joint Services Board.

A similar program is also now being established on the Salem Town Board.

In the county program, members are paired with mentor members of the County Board. They are encouraged to speak freely during committee discussions, and they cast non-binding votes alongside their elected adult counterparts.

Megan Jekot, an outgoing member who is soon to graduate from St. Joseph Catholic Academy, said she learned about all levels of county government during her time on the board's



Colin Barushok



John Carswell



Trevor Foster



Jacob Genthner



Rehnaz Jiwani



James Joling



Stephanie Kuruvilla



Sabrina Miceli

Executive Committee this past year, and last year as a member of the Human Services Committee.

"It was great because I was able to determine what I want to go into for college," said Jekot, who plans to study social work at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn.

Must be nominated

Nominated by teachers and others, Youth in Governance members are selected by a committee of outgoing members and county staff. High school sophomores and juniors are invited to apply for yearlong terms that run from spring to spring.

Last year, 186 students were nominated, 37 completed applications, 26 were granted interviews and 14 were selected, according to the program's 2011-12 annual report.

One of this year's new participants, Indian Trail High School junior Audrey Simard, said she is excited about serving on the Judiciary and Law Committee.

Simard, who immigrated to the United States from Canada, said she looks forward to gaining further knowledge of how her adopted homeland's government works.

"I want to experience a new perspective of the country that I moved to only a few years ago," Simard said.



Bianca Ricker



Emily Roe



Ashley Schneider



Justin Schweitzer



Audrey Simard



Michael Viroglio