

Lt. Gov. Crouch, IHEDA selects Monticello Next Generation Youth Advocates for 2023 My Community, My Vision initiative

Community planning program teaches high school age student groups to enhance development and quality of life in their communities

Monticello, Ind. (Dec. 6, 2022) – **Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch** and the **Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority** (IHEDA) have chosen the Monticello Next Generation Youth Advocates for the My Community, My Vision (MCMV) program, which connects high school students across Indiana to each other and to their neighborhoods, towns, and cities. The other selected student groups are as follows: Greensburg Mayor's Youth Council, Frankton High School Students in Action, Mishawaka Youth Advisory Council, Warren County Foundation Youth Council, Ripley County Youth Outreach, and the Mayor's Youth Council of Batesville.

"Maintaining strong and viable communities is important to the health of Indiana, and we need future leaders to begin thinking about their own visions for their cities and towns," said Crouch. "My Community, My Vision invites these future decision makers to share their ideas and plans with local officials. By their involvement, student leaders will learn about the planning process and the collaborative efforts required to create and maintain vibrant communities."

In collaboration with the Indiana Philanthropy Alliance (IPA) Youth Council program and the Association of Indiana Municipalities (AIM) Mayoral Youth Council program, the seven selected cohorts of students representing communities across the state will participate in a four-month program consisting of in-person workshops and self-guided curriculum to assist them in planning and fundraising for a place-based community project. Utilizing elements of IHEDA's crowd-granting [CreatiNg Places](#) program, students who successfully strategize, plan, and raise a fundraising goal of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 towards their community project in the program's duration will receive a matching grant from IHEDA.

"Placemaking is an important element of building stable communities where Hoosiers of all ages want to live, work, and play for years to come," said Jacob Sipe, IHEDA Executive Director. "The My Community, My Vision program gives young people a chance to invest in their hometowns and make their voices heard. These students are the future of Indiana's workforce, economy, and local leadership, and we can't wait to see what ideas they bring to life through this program."

"Our Next Generation Youth Advocates have amazed me since they became a leadership team just over a year ago," said Cathy Gross, City of Monticello Mayor. "They are student leaders that are committed to making a difference in our community and to make our world a better place. They know that small steps



can make big changes! Their project for My Community, My Vision was conceived by walking through the downtown and identifying challenges and brainstorming solutions. I look forward to watching them accomplish this project, and I couldn't be prouder of them."

Youth councils, alongside their foundation or local unit of government sponsor, will work throughout the spring semester to determine a project, craft a budget, develop a fundraising goal and strategy, and raise the needed funds for all materials during a 30-day fundraising campaign. Students will attend three required in-person workshops hosted by IHCDA where they will learn about different subjects such as placemaking, fundraising strategies, and stakeholder engagement to give students knowledge about the aspects of community planning, help reach their set project goal and provide networking and leadership opportunities. At the final in-person workshop, students will present their work and success to their peers and Indiana's community development leaders.

More information on My Community, My Vision can be found on [IHCDA's website](#). The selected teams will officially kick off with a workshop event on Jan. 21, 2023.