



# YMCA Center for Youth Voice Annual Leadership Update



May 20, 2025

Dear CYV Friend and Partner,

After kicking off 2025 with our two largest conference programs, my team and I are feeling inspired and energized by the young changemakers who are at the center of the Center for Youth Voice.

Thanks to ongoing support from donors like you, we wrapped up 2024 with much success and have already made incredible strides this year—during a time when our work is more important than ever. I'm eager to share with you some program highlights and updates and give you a glimpse of what's in store for the rest of the year.

- Last summer, we hosted the **YMCA National Judicial Competition** for the third year in a row. We welcomed 262 secondary students and 75 adults from more than 20 states, which represents a 21% increase in youth participation over 2023. Also in 2024, we were grateful for the 65 volunteer evaluators who included defense attorneys, general counsel, nonprofit attorneys, and several law professors, clerks, and judges (including one MN Supreme Court Justice!).
- Last fall, a record 538 K-12 schools across the state participated in our **Student Voting Mock Election program**, engaging more than 300,000 young people. This initiative allows students to experience the process of voting and aims to build lifelong voter habits and civic awareness.
- In January, our **2025 YIG Conference** saw a major increase in registrants, welcoming over 1,450 students from 54 schools. A local law firm provided free space for our Courts program area due to construction at the State Office Building. Also fun: Three YIG officers were featured on TPT's "Almanac" TV program, highlighting youth leadership in action.
- Last month, our **2025 Model United Nations Conference** hosted over 750 youth in grades 7-12, welcoming five new delegations and expanding participation through our Statewide Delegation. We even had to take over space at the Dayton Y due to high participation levels! We are thrilled to see this ongoing growth in all our conference programs.
- This spring, Center for Youth Voice students played key roles during **YMCA Day at the Capitol**, effectively engaging legislators alongside YMCA leaders, as well as the 10th annual **Youth Day at the Capitol (YDAC)**, which gave more than 600 young people from across Minnesota the chance to advocate for issues that matter most to them. Both events focus on student-led engagement and exhibit the power of youth voices in public policy conversations.
- We organized three **"Shadow a Lobbyist" Days** with support from members of the Center for Youth Voice Community Council, allowing students to explore careers in government relations.

(continued on backside)

- We proudly co-hosted the **first-ever Minnesota Civic Summit** with 10 partner organizations to support new state civics standards and teacher engagement. This event included a Respectful Conversations in Schools™ workshop and was praised for fostering civic dialogue during a divisive time. Plans are underway to make it an annual event.
- We led a bi-partisan legislative effort to establish a **Minnesota Civic Seal**, working closely with more than 45 students to create youth-led petitions, testimony, and peer education. We also received a grant through YUSA to formalize a **year-round youth advocates program** that would build on our efforts around the Minnesota Civic Seal and officially launch this fall.
- Despite the terrible flooding that created extensive damage to Blue Ridge Assembly, home of the **Conference on National Affairs**, we are still headed to CONA June 27-July 4 at Appalachian State University. 27 Minnesota delegates and 10 Wisconsin delegates will travel across the country to convene with nearly 700 students from over 30 states to debate issues of national and international concern.
- We continue to see **unprecedented requests for scholarships** to participate in our programs – a rising need that we are committed to meeting. And for every student who receives the highest level of scholarship, we also provide them with a \$50 meal assistance gift card. This year, that totaled more than \$15,000 in meal assistance to YIG and MUN participants.

**Your partnership is a key part in making all of the above (plus much, much more) possible, and we couldn't be more grateful!**

Truly, your generosity is more than philanthropic support—it's the driving force behind a movement. With our donors, alumni, parents, staff, and volunteers working together, young people are finding their voices, stepping up as leaders, and shaping a future where bipartisanship and civic engagement thrive. Your commitment helps transform passion into action, and for that, I can't thank you enough.



We're excited about what's ahead and very grateful to have you with us on this journey.

With heartfelt gratitude from the Center for Youth Voice community,

*Amy Anderson*

Amy Anderson  
CYV Executive Director

**P.S.** Let's stay connected! Explore ways to get involved at [ymcanorth.org/locations/center\\_for\\_youth\\_voice](https://ymcanorth.org/locations/center_for_youth_voice).