



May 30, 2026

Dear YMCA Center for Youth Voice Community Members,

If I had my way, every one of you would have the opportunity to see Center for Youth Voice program participants in action.

You'd watch them debate bills and hear cases at Youth in Government. You'd see them tackle global challenges and draft resolutions at Model UN. You'd sit in on meetings they lead with legislators or observe them guiding a Respectful Conversation™ in their classrooms.

I've had that vantage point for the past six years, and it never stops filling me with pride and hope.

Right now, it's easy to feel discouraged about politics, government, and even the basics of civic life like voting or volunteering. The challenges facing our communities can feel complex and daunting. But what I see every day reminds me that change doesn't start somewhere far off – it starts with young people.



The students in our programs are clear-eyed about the world they're inheriting, and they show growing determination to shape something better for their future. They are learning how government works, where decisions are made, and how to advocate effectively for the issues that matter to them, their families, and their communities. Along the way, they're building lifelong skills and lifelong friendships with peers who share their commitment to thoughtful, respectful engagement.



And I will be the first to say you don't have to take my word for it! At our Model UN conference in April, a student from Duluth, Kate D., was asked by a reporter what she valued most about her experience. This was her response:

"It's changed my life. It's a supportive community where you meet some of the most involved, capable students you've ever met, but none of them are here to compete. They are here to learn from one another, grow with each other, and have respectful conversations, which is something we need a lot more of in our world."

That right there is the impact you help make possible.

Your support fuels a generation of young people who have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to participate meaningfully in civic life – and to lead with curiosity, respect, and purpose. I am deeply grateful for your generosity and commitment to this work that helps make it possible.

On behalf of all those you reach through your partnership, thank you for being a vital part of our Center for Youth Voice community.

With appreciation and well wishes for a wonderful summer ahead,

Amy Anderson

Amy Anderson
Center for Youth Voice Executive Director

P.S. Did you know that the 2026–2027 program year marks the 80th anniversary of Youth in Government and the 40th anniversary of Model UN? Join the **Center for Youth Voice Alumni & Friends Network** to stay informed about programs and events happening during this milestone year. You must opt in by scanning the QR code to the right. Feel free to reach out to me directly at Amy.Anderson@ymcanorth.org to find out more about getting involved.



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