



FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

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Florida League of Cities Announces Municipal Youth Council Community Service Contest Winners

*Alachua, Atlantic Beach, Clermont, Pinecrest and Pinellas Park youth councils
recognized for volunteer service projects*

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TALLAHASSEE, FL – The **Florida League of Cities**, the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments, today announced the winners of the 2021 Municipal Youth Council Community Service Contest. Hosted annually, this contest showcases community service projects performed by municipal youth councils that successfully address specific needs in their local communities.

Composed of high school students within the city, municipal youth councils are special councils that typically serve as an advisory board to the local government. They are sometimes referred to as youth corps, teen advisory boards or mayor’s youth councils.

“Youth council members are the future leaders of our communities, and if what we saw from these students and their community service projects is any indication, our cities have a strong future ahead of them,” said **FLC President Tony Ortiz, commissioner** for the **City of Orlando**. “I encourage all of our youth councils to keep up the great work and to continue serving their cities. On behalf of the League, congratulations to this year’s contest winners!”

This year’s contest winners and their projects are:

- **City of Alachua Youth Advisory Council** – *“Used Softball/Baseball Equipment Drive for Foster Care Kids.”*
- **City of Atlantic Beach Youth Council** – *“Blessings in a Backpack.”*
- **City of Clermont Youth Council** – *“Homeless Care Pack Project.”*
- **Village of Pinecrest Youth Advisory Council** – *“Mental Health Awareness Day.”*
- **City of Pinellas Park TeenWorkX Youth Council** – *“Holiday Giveback Project.”*

The **City of Alachua Youth Advisory Council** worked with the University of Florida baseball and softball teams as well as the local Guardian Ad Litem program to collect sports equipment donations for foster children. Working together, members of the youth council formulated an outreach plan to contact local businesses, churches and other community organizations to inquire about setting up collection boxes. If approved, the council placed collection boxes at various locations throughout the city where people

could donate items such as baseball and softball bats, gloves, balls and more. In total, the council was able to collect more than 200 sports items.

For their community service project, the **City of Atlantic Beach Youth Council** partnered with “**Blessings in a Backpack**,” a national nonprofit organization. The project aimed to fight food insecurity among local elementary school children whose primary source of food is their school. The youth council planned out their project, deciding what contents to include in each backpack. Then, one-by-one, they filled each backpack, labeled and packaged them together for a local elementary school. Each backpack included healthy options such as fruit, tuna, macaroni and cheese, cereal, and peanut butter, as well as a few fun options such as Fruit Roll-Ups and Pop-Tarts. The youth council also included handmade cards of encouragement inside each backpack. Overall, the council exceeded their original expectations by more than 100%, gathering double the amount of supplies necessary for the project.

The **City of Clermont Youth Council** launched the “**Homeless Care Pack Project**” to help the city’s homeless population. The council decided to create hygiene care packages, which included items such as socks, a razor, soap and more. Each package also included a personal message of support from the city. Additionally, each package was made of reflective material in an effort to help keep members of the homeless community safe as they crossed streets or walked along sidewalks. The youth council then met with the Clermont Police Department for their insight and to learn more about the local homeless population. After learning that the police department regularly interacts with the city’s homeless population, the youth council was able to partner with the department for distribution of the care packages. Once the council prepared the hygiene care packages, they then gave them to the police department to distribute.

The **Village of Pinecrest Youth Advisory Council** set out to educate the community about mental health and raise awareness of its importance. To accomplish this, the council declared a “Mental Health Day” in their community and launched “YOUth,” a series of informational sessions on various mental health topics featuring experts on the issue.

Through their “**Holiday Giveback Project**,” members of the **City of Pinellas Park TeenWorkX Youth Council** were able to provide holiday gifts to local homeless children and at-risk youth. The youth council collaborated with Family Resources, a local nonprofit, on the project. They collected clothing, art supplies, games, hygiene products and other items, all of which were to be donated to SafePlace 2B Youth Shelter. Ultimately, the council was able to provide holiday gifts to every child at the shelter. The project was such a success, members of the youth council have decided to make it an annual service project.

Contest winners will receive a trophy, be featured in the League’s award-winning magazine, *Quality Cities (QC)*, and have their projects featured on the League’s website and social media accounts.

For information on the winning projects, [click here](#).

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Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida’s cities, which are formed and governed by their citizens. The League believes in “Local Voices Making Local Choices,” which focuses on the impact citizens and city leaders have in improving Florida’s communities. For more information, visit flcities.com.