



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2012-2013

As per County Ordinance, the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission is to submit an annual report to the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The annual report contains both internal recommendations to continue the progress that was made during the 2012-13 fiscal year as well as external recommendations for consideration of the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners.



OUR HISTORY

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission was created by County Ordinance in 2011 as part of the vision of Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan, District 1. Its purpose is to provide young people with a vehicle to participate in the process of county government. Motivated students from each Commission district represent and articulate the needs of youth in Miami-Dade and advise the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners on matters affecting the youth population.

Through the collaborative efforts of Miami-Dade governmental officials and departments, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and other community supporters, the Youth Commission is a positive model for young people: Officials hear firsthand what concerned teens have to say, have the opportunity to educate them about the governmental process, and create a symbiotic relationship between youth and County.

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission consists of twenty-six youth commissioners and four ex-officio commission members. These Youth Commissioners are handpicked by county commissioners through an interview and selection process in which the best-suited youth are selected to serve on the Miami-Dade Youth Commission. These Youth Commissioners provide a voice in the county government for the youth: the non-voting citizens of the county who are affected by the decisions of the elected officials.

OUR VISION

VISION

"OUR VOICES MATTER."

The youth commission was established for one sole purpose: to let the youth voice be heard, be active, get involved, and participate without the Board of County Commissioner.

OUR LEADERSHIP

YOUTH COMMISSION OFFICERS

These Youth Commissioners are elected by their colleagues to lead the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission and take part in specialized roles in the administrative ranks.

Jude Bruno (Chair)

Commissioner Jude Bruno was elected the 2012-2013 State Presidents for the Florida Public Service Association (FPSA). FPSA is a high school based club for students who are involved in the studies of Criminal Justice, Teacher Assisting and/or Firefighter Assisting founded in 1990. Commissioner Bruno also had the opportunity to serve as the Student Advisor to the School Board of Miami-Dade County Fla, representing over 35, 000 students and their interests. He was subsequently re-elected to serve his fourth and last term as SGA President at Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School, selected as a Finalist of the 2012 United Way's Outstanding Youth Award, reappointed to serve as a member of Miami-Dade County Council of PTA/PTSA, appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the National Parent Teacher Association, and chair its Youth Involvement Committee. Jude currently attends Miami-Dade College and FIU.

Jacob Stern (Vice-Chair)

Commissioner Stern attends Ransom Everglades where he is very active in the debate team. He created a program to educate youth about various topics called "Listen Up!" He also serves on the Florida Youth Commission.

Emily Freeman (Secretary)

Commissioner Emily Freeman has served as Miami-Dade County 4-H President, 4-H State Executive Board member, Secretary of the MDC 4-H Association, and District 13 4-H Mock Legislature Committee Co-Chair: which presides over Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Some of the awards that she has received since last summer are: 2nd Place at State-wide 4-H Public Speaking Competition, the Chris Allen Award for Outstanding Lobbyist at 4-H State Legislature 2013, and the Silver Clover award for Outstanding Community Service. She was also awarded the Discuss Award a \$2,500 scholarship. Freeman currently attends St. Petersburg's Community College.

Anyssa Chebbi (Parliamentarian)

Commissioner Anyssa Chebbi attends Coral Reef Senior High School as a student in the International Baccalaureate Program where she has attained a 3.5 un-weighted grade point average (GPA). Throughout her high school career she has received a 191 on her PSAT as well as a score of 5 on both: her AP World History and AP French Language examinations. She is also a nominee for Silver Knight in the category of social science. Commissioner Chebbi began to participate in "Walk to Cure Diabetes" in 2008, and in 2012 raised a total of \$692 for diabetes. She has been elected class president during her sophomore, junior, and now her senior year. She was also vice-president of the Model United Nations club at her school. One of her proudest accomplishments, thus far, is starting up the Homeless Youth Project where she has involved many schools in Miami-Dade County in hygiene drives to collect items for homeless students around the county.

Brenda Abreu-Molnar (Historian)

Commissioner Brenda Abreu Molnar has served as the Student Government President for two years in a row at TERRA Environmental Research Institute. Abreu-Molnar served as the Vice-President of the National Honor Society Chapter at her school and President of the National Honor Society. She has received numerous awards and acclamations including: the Leadership Award, Principal's Award, Outstanding Science Student Award, and Outstanding Math Student Award; while maintaining a 4.0 unweighted GPA. She plays libero for her Varsity Volleyball team and was an active member of Mu Alpha Theta. Her greatest honor is being a Miami-Dade Youth Commissioner and she has served as the Youth Commission's Historian for two years. She now attends Vanderbilt University.

OUR MEMBERS

District 1

Leon Fussell - Miami Central Senior High School*
Ivonne Logo - Miami Carol City Senior High School

District 2

Jude Bruno - Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School*
Isis Clark - Miami Central Senior High School*

District 3

Naomie Delva - Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School*
Virginia Lafontant - Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School*

District 4

Lina Rojas - Alonzo & Tracy Mourning Senior High School Biscayne Bay Campus*
Jacob Stern - Ransom Everglades School

District 5

Estrella Quiroz - Miami Senior High School

District 6

Cesar Castillo - Miami Springs Senior High School
Morgan Owens - Coral Reef Senior High School*

District 7

Emily Freeman - Home Schooled*
Ashley Sanchez - MAST Academy

District 8

Christopher Fisk Kolychkine - Miami Palmetto Senior High School*
Daniela Nuñez - G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School

District 9

Anyssa Chebbi - Coral Reef Senior High School
Ambar Mesa - Coral Reef Senior High School*

District 10

Brenda Abreu - Molnar Terra Environmental Research Institute*
Haley Zilberberg - School for Advanced Studies

District 11

Cynthia Larroque - G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School
Stephanie Pardinias - Liuzzi G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School

District 12

Walford Campbell - Belen Jesuit Preparatory School
Natalia Gonzalez - MAST Academy

District 13

Stephanie Gastelu - Barbara Goleman Senior High School
Nicklaus Matos - Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School*

Miami-Dade County Mayor

Michael Ivory - North Miami Senior High School

Miami-Dade Commission Chair

Vacant

Miami-Dade County Clerk

Daniel Tirado - Miami Beach Senior High School*

Agenda Coordinator

Liljuan Gonzalez - William H. Turner Technical Arts Senior High School*

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Shakira Santos - Miami Palmetto Senior High School *(Representing the Student Advisor to the School Board)*

**Denotes Graduating Seniors.*

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR: JUDE BRUNO

Letter from the Chair: Jude Bruno

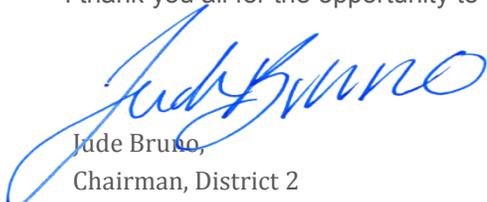


As young leaders, my colleagues and I now know and have experienced firsthand what it's like to have someone help us to make our potential become a reality and be our own advocate. This is why, on behalf of the 2012-2013 Miami-Dade County Youth Commission, we thank the members of the Board of County Commissioners for affording us this opportunity to serve. On a more personal note, I own a profound sense of gratitude to County Commissioner Jean Monestime for allowing me to represent my community, my home, district 2.

I have enjoyed this opportunity with much fanfare to serve as a Youth Commissioner and Chair of the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission. I am proud to say that as a county advisory board we have come far and trust that this group will continue to make progress. Most would have expected that upon my appointment and election to this position, I would have been nervous to lead such a new group of leaders - I WASN'T! I had set out to use all that I have learned from serving with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), my community, and various student organizations throughout my educational career to better represent my generation.

I would like to personally thank the outgoing executive committee members for their hard work over the past two years. Together we have achieved greatness with the creation of the "It Ought to be an Ordinance" a county student legislation program, support of the school bond referendum 222, organizing non-violence forums with the Community Relation Board during the George Zimmerman trial, advocating for our first budget, co-sponsoring a 9/11 Memorial ceremony with my alma mater, creating a new MDCYC website, and so much more. I personally would like to recognize the hard work of Daniel Tirado, Ambar Mesa, Brenda Abreu-Molnar and Natalia Gonzalez for rising up to the occasion a number of times. I could not have been an effective chair without you all. I also thank the members of the Juvenile Services Department staff for assisting my team these last two years under the leadership of Director Morris Copeland, Division Director Cathy Burgos and Special Projects Coordinator Jeannette Garcia. These past two years, we had a number of projects that required an "all hands on deck" approach. So I thank Ms. Gloria Madison, Ms. Genvea Wallen, Ms. Vivan Lopez, Ms. Angela Mitchell, and various others for lending a helping hand. When I began my tenure, my goals were very simple as with many of the organizations I have served in a leadership capacity. The goal was to LEAD by **LEARNING, EMPOWERING, ACHIEVING** greatness and **DEVOTE** to be a better than we are. The Miami Dade County Youth Commission has done just that and more.

I thank you all for the opportunity to lead, and rest assured you will continue to have my support.


Jude Bruno,
Chairman, District 2
August 1, 2013

“IT OUGHT TO BE AN ORDINANCE”

“It Ought to Be an Ordinance”

During the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission under the leadership of Jude Bruno created and piloted the “It Ought to Be an Ordinance” a student legislation program. Students that participated in this law and civic education program were able to learn from some leaders in the county about public policy and present a draft ordinance to members of the Youth commission.

Schools were to create teams of no more than five (5) people and select one (1) ordinance presenter for each team. Students must identify an issue in the community that the county has jurisdiction over. Each school was allowed to create two (2) ordinances and could not enter no more than two (2) teams into the competition. The competition had taken place in two-tiers. The first round was for the teams to submit a draft of the ordinance with all relevant information and a mission and purpose statement by Tuesday, February 19th, 2013 to mdcyc2013competition@gmail.com no later than 12:00 A.M. EST.

The second round was televised on Tuesday, February 26th, in the Miami Dade County Commission Chambers.

The program was featured on the National Association of County Officials (NAco) newsletter.

VISITING THE FLORIDA STATE CAPITAL

Visiting the Florida State Capital

During the regular Miami-Dade County Public Schools spring break, the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission (MDCYC) visited the Florida State Capital to meet with members of the Miami-Dade Delegation, take a tour of Florida State University and the Florida Supreme Court. MDCYC members also met with Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Secretary Wansley Walters the former Director of the Miami-Dade Juvenile Services Department (JSD) and Assistant Secretary of Prevention for DJJ Wanda Finnie the former Special Projects Administrator for JSD and their staff about creating youth commission throughout the state in other counties utilizing the MDCYC as a model.

After returning, conversation began about visiting other youth commission of youth advisory councils and boards that share the same ideals in the near future. The first trip might be to the Philadelphia Youth Commission in Pennsylvania.

The Philadelphia Youth Commission was born out of an activism of a few passionate youth. Realizing the impact youth commissions were making in ether urban cities, the youth partnered with Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) and lobbied City Council to support the creation of the Philadelphia Youth Commission. Councilwomen Blondell Reynolds Brown believed in the PYC's mission and sponsored legislation that put a Youth Commission Initiative on the 2007 ballot. Determined to ensure the initiative passed, these young people formed the Working Group, a collection of politically active youth from all corners of Philadelphia. Thanks to the hard work of the Working Group, PCCY and Councilwomen Reynolds Brown, the measure passed successfully, garnering 75% of the vote. The Philadelphia Youth Commission began service on January 1, 2008.

The end result would be creating a relationship that would detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding. We hope to reach the same result with the District of Columbia Youth Advisory Council (DCYAC) in Washington, D.C. On May 5, 2001, a proposal for the creation of a DCYAC was prepared by the Youth Summit Advisory Board, which was comprised of youth. The proposal was developed based on a site visit to Portland, Oregon, and Hampton, Virginia, where a successful youth councils have been in place. After careful and extensive deliberation, the Board adapted many of the ideas and concepts from these other youth councils to meet the unique needs of the District of Columbia. The DCYAC was created out of a May 5, 2001 a proposal from the Youth Summit Advisory Board. The group's proposal was developed based on a site visit to Portland, Oregon, and Hampton, Virginia, where a successful youth councils have been in place. After careful and extensive deliberation, the Board adapted many of the ideas and concepts from these other youth councils to meet the unique needs of the District of Columbia. In April 2002, Mayor Anthony A. Williams signed legislation establishing the DC Youth Advisory Council (DCYAC). The DCYAC is located within the Executive Office of the Mayor.

COLLABORATING WITH TEEN COURT

Collaborating With Teen Court

In the month of May 2013, the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission participated in The 6th Annual Miami-Dade County Teen Court Youth Speaking Out against Violence Conference: Inspiring Peaceful Change. More than 300 students, parents, teachers and public officials were on hand for this event. Former Youth Commissioner Arielle Dervial, District 5 greeted the audience as the morning speaker. Workshops were available for participants to join and one of them was being presented by the MDCYC under the guidance of Youth Commissioner Natalia Gonzalez, District 12. The members of the MDCYC answered questions about the role and responsibility of the county's only youth advisory board and share best practices on how to be an effective leader.

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission also attended the Juvenile Justice Forum hosted by the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust Teen Court Youth Action Committee and the Miami-Dade Juvenile Services Department (JSD). Florida Juvenile Justice Secretary Wansley Walters and Director J.D. Patterson of Miami-Dade Police Department informed the audience on both of the agencies progress. Students from various schools in the downtown area were in attendance.

INTERNAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Internal Recommendations

- The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission recommends that recruitment to fill vacancy begin at an early stage to allow a full seated commission the opportunity to be more active and engaged with the community it represents.
- The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission will need to create a strategic plan to provide each new commission cycle a road map to continue providing the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners a driven and action-oriented set of recommendations.
- Create a network, alumni association or foundation similar to re-connect the previous members with the purpose of continuing the support of the MDCYC and advocating for youth.

EXTERNAL RECOMMENDATION

External Recommendation

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission recommends the following to the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

CREATE A HIGHER EDUCATION RELATIONS BOARD

South Florida is home to a number of both public and private colleges and universities that are well respected throughout the United States and State of Florida. Boasting approximately 245,000+ college students, we must ensure that our educational institutions are equipping the next generation of county and community leaders the skills needed to face challenge and thrive in the 21st Century Miami-Dade County Government. The creation of a Higher Education Relations Board is a great offshoot of the county's AIM: *Actively Investing in Miami-Dade* initiative. This board would coordinate activities and explore mutual concerns with institutions of higher learning, share best practices, maximize resources and engage the county in the education of college students by creating a county student engagement plan for BCC approval and recommendation from the Mayor. The board would ideally recommend programs and projects to the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners that enhance the relations between the County and local institutions of higher learning. A Higher Education Relations board would mirror the functions of the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission and the Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board. Membership would be a mixture of professors, school officials, college students and the Miami-Dade County Public School System representatives.

LEGISLATING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Electronic cigarettes or E-Cigarettes are labeled as a safer and cleaner way to get a nicotine dose. It was first introduced in 2007 and since that time has been surging in popularity in Miami-Dade County and has been confused as a regular cigarette. Some experts have indicated that these new smoking substitutes/alternatives are harmless for children. Researchers who have always raised concerns over secondhand smoke are now raising concerns over "secondhand vapor" as more and more teens are trying these products as well as adults near children. Due to the fact that E-Cigarette is not labeled as tobacco and is not subject to federal and state tobacco laws. This means that teens can purchase it without proof of age. This has caused a number of organizations and schools to update their smoking ban. The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission proposes that the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners update all county ordinances, resolutions, administrative and implementing orders to incorporate electronic cigarettes or nicotine dispensing devices. The mere use offers one the allusion that smoking is allowed on county owned properties and sends the wrong message to our youth and community.

EXTERNAL RECOMMENDATION

REVIEW OF THE JUVENILE CURFEW ORDINANCE

The Juvenile Curfew Ordinance was created around 1994, and when enforcement began to increase in the early 2000s, it was met with resistance by teenagers and activists. When the Florida Supreme Court found similar laws in the cities of Tampa and Pinellas Park unconstitutional, Miami-Dade County then decided to take a proactive approach to reevaluate its enforcement. Sometime around 2010, it was decided that the law would be enforced in the summer months, from the end of the calendar school year until August 31st. While the ordinance allows some exceptions, MDCYC recommends that the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners begin creating a plan of action to enforce the law in a practical, non-restrictive and evidence-based manner for the summer months. A plan that would be shared with various law enforcement and governmental agencies to safeguard our county's youth in a coordinated response.

CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON SHELTERS FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission has been involved in a number of projects related to homelessness. Several members of the youth commission have lead projects, coordinated food drives and participate in the "iCount Miami" campaign. The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission is requesting that a study be conducted to determine if Miami has sufficient housing for youth who are homeless for both girls and boys. MDCYC also recommends that safeguards be examine to see if youth in these facilities are safe and treated properly.

YOUTH FUNDRAISING

The sight of minors walking alongside dangerous intersections, streets and road trying to fundraiser for school or youth-oriented programs is a very common one in Miami-Dade County. In most cases, these youth may not necessarily be affiliated with an organization or may be going against the rules or recommendation of the organizations regarding to fundraising. This creates a potential liability for the organization that possibly may be misrepresented and have their standing in the community diminished. We recommend that Mayor and Board of County Commissioners begin rulemaking procedures to explore the possibility of regulating minors fundraising along roads, intersections and streets and that a permit process be established to ensure that allow parties involved have the proper clearance and are authorized to fundraise.

INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Individual Highlights

DISTRICT 5

Under the guidance of Commissioner Bruno Barreiro, District Five has engaged in many activities that have dedicated their services to improving youth and maintaining stability within the district. In recent years Commissioner Barreiro has developed the People's Transportation Plan, and supported Miami Children's Museum Take Stock in Children program as well as the School Readiness Grant Program. Commissioner Barreiro also has a non for profit organization with the goal to provide assistance to the underprivileged youth and elderly. The foundation holds an annual event during the Christmas Holiday and gives toys to the children in the community. This foundation also engages many volunteers (youth and adults) to assist with the event. Commissioner Barreiro believes it is a great opportunity for the youth that volunteer since it also helps them meet their requirement for community hours.

District Five Youth Commissioner Estrella Quiroz of Miami Senior High also hopes to follow in the footsteps of Commissioner Barreiro by getting involved in the community. Through the help of various businesses in the area, Commissioner Quiroz has helped Interact Club collect school supplies for their Honduras Project. For this project, several supplies ranging from backpacks-to pencils-to paper, are to be sent to a school in the small town of La Providencia Honduras in order to promote education in other parts of the world as well. Commissioner Quiroz also attended a Youth Empowerment Summit workshop several Saturday mornings that provided information on safety programs and substance abuse as well as other areas. She then hosted and presented a Youth Summit at her own school to pass on the same knowledge with several students and parents. Various amounts of efforts have been exerted through Commissioner Barreiro as well as everyone else who works in District Five's office. With the help of every person changes can be made, and changes, big or small, can make a difference in the community. As we all know "Where there's a will there's a way."

INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 6

The 2012-2013 commission year has been a busy one for the office of the District 6 Youth Commissioners. In continuation of last year's Homeless Youth Project, Cesar conducted a toiletry drive at Miami Springs Senior High School for homeless youth in Miami-Dade County. In addition, "The Walk for the fight against heart disease and stroke" was organized by Cesar to promote health awareness in district six in the month of March in collaboration with the city of Miami Springs, The Pilot Club of Miami, Miami Springs Anchor Club, Oleeta West Dade masonic Lodge, The Masonic Medical Research Laboratories and Miami Springs Senior High School where approximately \$900 were raised for heart research and over 75 High school students were present along with many community members. In the Month of May the "Creating Community Change" Youth Empowerment Summit was held at Miami Springs Senior High School where District 6 Youth Commissioner Cesar Castillo presented to parents, community members, and Students about staying safe inside as well as outside of school.

DISTRICT 8

Youth Commissioner Daniela Nunez has been engaged in many aspects of her community through volunteerism. Also, Commissioner Nunez has become an advocate of suicide prevention at her high school and in her community through seminars such as the the "Creating Community Change" seminar that she participated in at her high school. She has achieved leadership in organizations such as Woman of Tomorrow a non-profit organization chapter. Commissioner Nunez, has not only played an active role in her community but has showcased her personal achievements and dedication to her community.

DISTRICT 9

In the 2012-2013 fiscal year, Youth Commissioner Anyssa Chebbi spearheaded the second annual Homeless Youth Project; an initiative by which hygiene and school supplies are collected by youth commissioners for homeless youth in Miami Dade County. In addition, Commissioner Chebbi represented the Youth Commission on the Homeless Youth Point in Time Count, a Federal interagency initiative that aims to improve counts of unaccompanied homeless youth so that resources to improve their situations may be properly allocated.

INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 10

In the 2012-2013 Commission Year the District 10 Youth Commissioners have done their best to promote advocacy for the youth in Miami-Dade County, specifically in District 10. Besides regularly promoting anti-violence and good decisions as role models in schools, the Youth Commissioners of District 10 have participated in several community events that benefit the children of District 10. District 10 Youth Commissioner Haley Zilberberg attended Saturday sessions at Coral Gables Senior High School to learn how to be a peer counselor to promote community change, anti-violence, good decisions, and other basic concepts in Miami-Dade County Public School's program called "Creating Community Change". She was one of two peer counselors who presented on various topics at School for Advanced Studies Kendall Campus for the entire student body. This presentation was seen by parents, students, teachers, and faculty from School for Advanced Studies. All high schools in District 10 also were able to see this presentation. Youth Commissioner Haley Zilberberg is also working on providing a way for teens who have questions to seek help. She is in the process of starting a project with Switchboard of Miami to re-establish a teen hotline with recorded messages about various issues teenagers may encounter. This year has been a great year for the District 10 Youth Commissioners and they hope to do even more in the next Commission Year.

DISTRICT 11

During the commission year, District 11 Youth Commissioner Stephanie Pardinias Liuzzi attended the Walk About Autism for the Dan Marino Foundation where many community members attended. This was a great event that was focused on raising awareness on Autism, as it is estimated that it affects 1 out of every 110 children born in the United States. In continuation to last year, Stephanie tutored students every Tuesday and Thursday in the months of February and March, to prepare them for the Fcat. Also in the month of February, Commissioner Stephanie Pardinias attended the Tallahassee Trip and the Miami Kidney Walk which was one of the several charities held in District 11. In the month of March and April Stephanie conducted a food and toy drive for homeless children alongside the program, Youth Against Domestic Violence and then delivered the food and toys collected to several families in need. In the month of May the "Creating Community Change" Youth Empowerment Summit was held at G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School where District 11 Youth Commissioner Stephanie Pardinias presented to many parents, members of the community, and students. The presentation focused on advising the youth on how to deal with bullying, peer pressure, suicide and stress, there were over 100 people who attended the presentation.