

February 17, 2011

Dear Student,

I believe that a community is measured by how well it takes care of its younger citizens. You are truly our greatest asset and resource and the strength of our future. You have a lot to add to our community and I want to give you the opportunity to be heard.

Over the past several months, I have been exploring ways to engage our youth in the community and civic process. City leaders often wonder: How can we reach our youth? How can we provide them with positive activities when they aren't in school?

Many cities are discovering that when they set up youth councils and offer other meaningful leadership opportunities, young people want to be involved and will recruit their peers to join them. More importantly, young people who are involved in positive activities are less likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, commit crimes, become pregnant or engage in other risky behavior.

Youth councils are a popular and powerful way to promote young people's participation in local government and their community, helping them:

- Learn firsthand about how government works;
- Gain leadership experience and new skills, such as public speaking and working in teams;
- Develop a sense of responsibility, belonging,, confidence and empowerment; and
- Realize that their voices matter and that they can improve their communities through ideas and service.

Some of the main goals for Red River's Youth Advisory Council are to provide leadership experience, increase the involvement of our youth with the governing body, and to encourage community service.

I am enclosing an application for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. This will be open to all Red River youth from 7th -12th grades. I'm waiting to see what type of interest and response I receive, before determining if the size of the council will need to be limited. Along with the application, please submit a letter of recommendation from your school principal and two letters of recommendation from people in the community. The application deadline is February 28th. They can either be dropped off at Town Hall or mailed to P.O. Box 1020, Red River, NM 87558.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to working more closely with you, and hope to see this new Youth Council grow into something that will be very beneficial for the community and something you will be proud to be a part of.

Sincerely,

Linda Calhoun, Mayor
Town of Red River
(575) 770-0420