

"We saw the interaction and natural leadership skill sets come out related to leadership. Our goal was to allow them (the youth) to run with it and shine, and they did."

- LaNelle Ramey, Mentor Greater Milwaukee

SUCCESS STORY

Youth Voice SUMMIT

The Youth Voice Summit gave young people a space to talk about current issues and have their voices heard.

Violence Prevention Grants

In summer 2022, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF) dedicated an initial investment of \$1 million to support urgent healing, community-building, and violence prevention efforts. GMF awarded one such **Violence Prevention Grant to the Milwaukee Succeeds-led Youth Forward MKE Coalition** to invest in youth-identified programming that increases access to mental health supports and creates more equitable and inclusive school environments, helping to solve the lack of youth voice and ownership.

The YFM Coalition is **disbursing funds to three projects**: the Youth Voice Summit, Milwaukee Community Schools School Lunch/Nutrition Project, and Sky Schools. Each of these projects will be highlighted in their own success story.

The Youth Voice Summit

Mentor Greater Milwaukee (MGM) founded the Youth Voice Summit to train young people to confidently use their voice to advocate for the resources, support, and actions they need to reduce the issues facing our community.

Youth ambassadors from MGM planned and led the Summit, from selecting topics to facilitating sessions. Approximately 100 young people attended the event, held at the Fiserv Forum in early August, to engage around topics like leadership, reckless driving, high school graduation, college admission, and mentoring in the workplace.

Youth walked away with **strategies to better use their voice for change**, along with **connections and relationships** to other young people and adults.



What Worked

01

Youth as Leaders

Youth Ambassadors from MGM developed the schedule and sessions for the Summit, where youth – not adults – guided the conversations. Participants were engaged and energized, with many asking if they could return for next year’s Summit.

02

Making Lasting Connections

Attendees were excited to be in-person for the Summit and to make connections with other young people who also want to see change in their community.



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“It is possible to have youth involved at a number of stages around grant making and prioritizing it. Youth were involved in decision-making and in planning for the actual project/program. **It is possible to make sure that young people are meaningfully engaged in the process.**”

- Clintel Hasan, Milwaukee Succeeds



What Could Be Improved



Planning of the Summit

The Summit was scheduled in August, shortly before young people returned to school and other commitments. There wasn’t a good plan to share action items and give youth the opportunity to plan next steps. Also, some organizations and their attendees were not properly prepared for youth to lead, so it’s important to make sure that organizations and attendees have a good understanding of expectations.



Overall Grant Process Timing

While the responsiveness to violence in our community is greatly appreciated, the timing of the grant process (mid to late summer) and the quick turnaround required for the grant application, made it difficult for some organizations to even consider applying.

Quotes from Attendees

“The main goal was the 3 A’s: **amplify, advocate, and take action**. We wanted youth to be ready to formulate a plan to empower themselves. It helped us find where we belonged.”

“Our job is to **speak for those without a voice**...we wanted to share the importance of youth voice and learn how to use our own voice.”

“The purpose of the Youth Voice Summit as a whole was really getting youth together to talk about things going on and to **find better ways to advocate**...first time we voiced our opinion on these issues.”

For more information, contact Kristin Kappelman: kkappelman@milwaukesucceeds.org