



home > city hall > press releases

Five New Members Join Youth Advisory Committee



Perris City Clerk Nancy Salazar (far right) swears in five new members of the Perris Youth Advisory Committee: From left to right: Alexa Olivas, Gloria Olivas, Oskar Guzman, Amanda Torres and Jose Ortega.

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The Perris City Council recently appointed five new members to the City's Youth Advisory Committee.

Created last year, the City's YAC serves as a conduit between the teen-age set and Perris elected and administrative officials, proving insight into the types of program and activities popular among young folks. Since its inception, members of the committee have taken part in a community clean-up, organized a teen dance, shadowed Perris City administrators to glean first-hand on-the-job knowledge, participated in City parades and supported other special activities, including several Live Well Perris healthy eating active living events.

YAC members must be 13 to 18-years of age and be enrolled in grades 8 to 12.

Appointed to the committee this month were Gloria Olivas, 17; her sister, Alexa Olivas, 15; Oskar Guzman, 16; Amanda Torres, 17, and Jose Ortega, 17. All attend Rancho Verde High School. The five were appointed to replace other commissioners who have moved on to college and other activities. They were appointed unanimously on July 8.

Guzman, a member of Rancho Verde's Air Force ROTC program, said he would to begin a Big Brother program in Perris to prevent youngsters from experimenting with drugs and alcohol. He believes the Teen Center would prove the ideal setting as a place to mentor younger students to help them develop greater self-esteem.

"We need to ask youngster experimenting with drugs and alcohol if they want to do something better with their lives," Guzman said.

Guzman called his appointment to the Youth Advisory Committee "amazing." He hopes one day to work in the movie industry.

The Olivas sisters are both runners who would like to see the City begin a running club for middle and high-schoolers. Gloria Olivas runs cross-country and 1,600-meter races. She said running would raise self-esteem through exercise. Strength and endurance could be improved in shorter runs which would culminate in a one-mile run, she said.

Gloria Olivas said she was "really happy" for her appointment to the YAC.

"Things will be done right," she said.

She is an avid student of history who enjoys connecting Biblical culture and people to events of today. Gloria also plays acoustic guitar.

Alexa Olivas says she would like to increase awareness of bullying, with YAC members organizing seminars to provide tips to decrease the likelihood of becoming a victim. She said she is glad to be on the committee because "you can help with the issues facing teen-agers while being a teen-ager." Alexa is an A-student in history and would like to become a computer programmer.

Ortega also enjoys running and believes Perris teens can improve their fitness through the sport. He would like to explore the idea of establishing some running routes in the City to encourage youngsters to improve their fitness. He says working on the youth committee is a "great way to get involved in the City," describing Perris as a "friendly, kind and energetic" place. He plans on attending UC Irvine to study computer engineering.

Torres said she will use her time on the Youth Advisory Committee to focus the spotlight on issues like body-image, bulimia and teen insecurity. Those issues affect both boys and girls, she said.

Torres said her appointment to the YAC represents an important milestone.

"I have never done something that was so important to me," she said.



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