



## Youth Advisory Committee Teens to Make Mark



Newly appointed members of the Perris Youth Advisory Committee pose for a group picture with City staff members. First row (l to r) Gabriella Bulcan, Ronnae Lockette, Lara Tovar, India Rockett, Shaeera Ahmed, Brittany Burch. Back row (l to r) Perris staff members Sara Cortes de-Pavon, Sabrina Chavez and Paulnesha Magee; appointees Jeremy Guillermo, Martin Medrana and Josue Santana; City staff members Sarina Brannon and Josh Estrada.

Eleven teen-agers from throughout Perris were appointed Oct. 29 as the inaugural members of the City's newly created Youth Advisory Committee.

City officials, as part of their long-range vision for Perris, are committed to engaging young people about their concerns and seeking their input as they created plans and programs to address them. The City created the Youth Advisory Committee created as a way of "empowering youth and enabling them to make a direct impact on the youth community" by serving as a liaison between the teen-age set at the City Council.

Members will serve up to two years. The committee will meet the first at 5 p.m. on the Tuesday of the month in the City Council chambers. The City would like the committee to include 14 teen-agers. Interested applicants for the vacant positions are asked to call Paulnesha Magee at 951-943-6603, ext. 247 or email at [pmagee@cityofperris.org](mailto:pmagee@cityofperris.org).

During a special work session in which they officially were named as committee members, Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and members of the City Council urged the young leaders to take their work seriously, work as a team and set aside personal aspirations to create a better Community.

"You are all so qualified," Perris City Councilman Al Landers told the new committee members. "It's people like you who are going to make Perris an even greater City than it already is."

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said the teens will take their places in the long history of Perris, which began more than 100 years ago.

"You will be part of the long legacy of the City of Perris," Rogers said. "This is your chance to put your stamp on this City."

Following their appointments, Perris elected officials and administrators invited the members of the Youth Advisory Committee for an informal meeting and refreshments in a City Council conference room. Mayor Busch explained some of the requirements that municipal officials must follow, including regulations that require almost all City business to be conducted in public meetings open to Perris residents. One of the first actions of the new committee will be selecting a president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary.

Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough said that the committee members represent various high schools, come from various ethnic backgrounds and family situations and will be tempted to pursue their own issues. He urged them to avoid those temptations and remember "that we are all people and that we should all together as a team."

"We want you to be successful," he said.

City Councilman Julio Rodriguez said he was "incredibly excited" about the creation of the committee and commended all the teen-agers who will launch the initiative.

The Perris Youth Advisory Committee members are:

- ▶ **Shaeera Ahmed**, 16, a junior at Rancho Verde High School. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Rancho Verde Scholars. She plays guitar, sings mezzo soprano in the school choir and serves in the Key Club, which mentors incoming students and helps them adjust to high-school life.
- ▶ **Gabriella Bulacan**, 14, a freshman at Rancho Verde High School. She has organized and participated in school fundraisers and serves as a tutor to elementary school students. "I want teens to have an active role in shaping our community since they are the future of Perris."
- ▶ **Brittany Burch**, 13, an eight-grader at California Military Institute. As a cadet at the campus, Brittany has taken part in many activities, including participating in City parades as a member of the unarmed drill team.
- ▶ **Briana Gonzalez**, 13, an 8-grader at Tomas Rivera Elementary School. In her application to the Youth Advisory Committee, Briana said that she volunteers helping the maintenance crew keep the campus spic-and-span. She said one of her goals on the committee would be to keep Perris green by planting trees.
- ▶ **Jeremy Guillermo**, 17, a senior at Perris High School. Jeremy is part of the school's upper-class students who mentor incoming freshman. He has volunteered at many community events, including the recent Halloween Festival and the Palm Elementary School Carnival. He has completed numerous Advanced Placement courses and is ranked in the top 10 percent of his high-school class. He hopes to become a doctor.
- ▶ **Ronnae Lockette**, 17, a senior at Perris High School. Ronnae's volunteer service includes feeding the homeless in the City. She is a former member of the school's Junior ROTC program, has volunteered in school clean-up days, has earned varsity letters in track and field and organized events like Friday Night Live, which promotes drug-and-alcohol free activities at the school.
- ▶ **Martin Medrano**, 16, a junior at Rancho Verde High School. Martin's volunteer activities include serving as a docent at the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, where he guides visitors through the City's history museum. He is a member of the school's "Link Crew," which mentors students who are struggling academically, and a member of the National Honor Society. An aspiring filmmaker, he and other members of the school's "Film Crew" have produced several short movies.
- ▶ **Crystal Ocampo**, 13, an 8th-grader at Tomas Rivera Middle School. Crystal takes part in the school's AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program at the school. She is interested in serving as a mentor to kindergartners and elementary school students. Teacher G. McWhorter described Crystal in a letter in support of her appointment as a young woman who is "not afraid of a challenge and is a self-motivated individual."
- ▶ **India Rockett**, 14, a freshman at Rancho Verde High School. India has helped plan school dances and has taken part in clean-up days at the school campus. She is a member of the school's Associated Student Body. Teacher Katie Parmer describes her as a natural leader who is "the definition of maturity and responsibility."
- ▶ **Josue "Josh" Santana**, 16, a junior at Rancho Verde High School. Josh is a tutor at Avalon Elementary School and also coaches a girls' soccer team. He also serves as part of the student organization that mentors younger high-school students. One of his goals as a Youth Advisory Committee members is to hold seminars and invite guest speakers to encourage teen-agers to improve their self-image and self-esteem.
- ▶ **Lara Tovar**, 17, a junior at Perris High School. Lara is a member of the cheer-leading squad who volunteers at the Cesar E. Chavez Public Library in Perris and participates in track, cross-country, the National Honors Society, Upward Bound, the Calculus Club and the Constitution Team. She maintains a A-average in a schedule of classes that include many Advanced Placement courses. She hopes to attend USC with a goal of becoming a food chemist.