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## Perris Welcomes New YAC Members



Outgoing Perris Youth Advisory Committee members Gabriel Vallin, Jacqueline Reliford and Ebere Amadi were recognized for their commitment to the community during a recent luncheon.

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The City of Perris said goodbye to four members of its Youth Advisory Committee while welcoming in the next group of teen-age leaders committed to planning significant events to engage middle and high-school students from the community and beyond. Outgoing YAC President Jacqueline Reliford, Vice-President Ebere Amadi and Representatives Gabriel Vallin and Kimberly Castillo and Member-at-Large Megan Baker were celebrated at a June 11 luncheon attended by parents, Perris City Administrators and staff members.

The following day, new and returning officers and members of the committee introduced themselves at the June 12 Perris City Council meeting.

The YAC plans and completes numerous activities of interest to City teen-agers and their peers throughout Inland Southern California.

Those include seminars focusing on bullying, teen-age depression and suicide and texting and driving. The organization also has organized a monthly "open-mic night" to allow aspiring poets, singers and musicians a venue to perform. YAC volunteers also take part in many Perris activities such as parades, the Senior Prom, Rods & Rails Festival and Health Fair.

City Manager Richard Belmudez said the YAC members donated more than 240 hours of volunteer time in the past year.

"We are very proud of all they have accomplished," he said. "They have contributed a lot to the City in terms of community engagement. We are very proud of all of them. The future is in great hands."

Jacqueline, Ebere, Gabriel and Kimberly outlined their future plans for 2018 and beyond. Megan was unable to attend the farewell luncheon.

### More about Jacqueline

Jacqueline Reliford, 17, graduated from Rancho Verde High School and will attend UC San Diego to study sociology. She said her time in the Perris YAC has taught her vital lessons about leadership.

"Being a leader requires more than telling people what to do," she said. "You have to encourage people to bring the best out of themselves."

Jacqueline got some advice about being a leader from a woman well acquainted with the halls of power. When Jacqueline was a freshman in high school, she wrote to then-First Lady Michelle Obama seeking advice about how to become a leader. Obama's response: get involved in your community.

So Jacqueline joined the YAC soon afterward, first as a member then vice president and later assuming the mantle of committee president.

"I appreciate everything the City of Perris has done to encourage teens to become leaders," she said. "The City is encouraging teen-agers to come out of their shells and experience new challenges."

Jacqueline's hobbies include playing tenor saxophone.

### Meet Ebere

Ebere's stated goal is succinct: to rule the world. To help him get started, Ebere—a graduate of the California Military Institute—will continue his education at Pomona College where he will study politics, economics and philosophy.

"I plan to make politics my career," he said.



Members of the Perris Youth Advisory Committee were honored during the June 12 Perris City Council meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Malcolm Corona, YAC President Jacqueline Reliford, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, YAC Representative Kimberly Castillo, YAC Vice-President Ebere Amadi, Mayor Michael Vargas, YAC Representative Gabriel Vallin, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke and City Councilman David Starr Rabb posed for a photo during the recognition ceremony.

Ebere, 17, is pleased the YAC gave him a chance to get a behind-the-scenes look at how the City functions. He also enjoyed helping promote Perris events and learning about the City's marketing programs.

"I appreciate all the opportunities I've had to meet City leaders who know so much about the City's organization," he said. "That's given me the opportunity to get to know my City better."

Ebere captained the CMI volleyball team this year. He's also a movie fan. A favorite new movie: "Call Me by Your Name." Classic favorites: "Casablanca," "Citizen Kane" and "The Third Man."

### Gabriel's plans

Gabriel will attend UC San Diego where he plans to study economics and business. He is a 2018 graduate of Rancho Verde High School. He enjoyed his time on the YAC because it "helped me take on a leadership role and taught me what our City is—a place for youth."

"The YAC taught me to be selfless-not selfish," he said.

Gabriel said his favorite activity with the YAC was the Teen Wellness Workshop that highlighted the effects of cyber bullying, pressure to succeed in academics and extracurricular activities and the price of popularity—and the consequences of failing to meet ultra-high expectations.

"That event opened up a lot of eyes to the topic of mental illness," he said.

In his spare time, Gabriel enjoys playing video games like "Fortnite" and "Call of Duty."

### Kimberly's future

Kimberly, 17, plans to attend Los Angeles City College and pursue a degree in art, with the ultimate goals of becoming an art teacher. Her favorite YAC activity was the recent Senior Prom, which drew hundreds of grandparents and great-grandparents for a night of dining, dancing and reminiscing.

"It was nice to see the seniors having fun and hanging out," she said.

Kimberly says the YAC draws together teen-agers with different interest from different schools in different parts of Perris and that makes for a better mutual learning experience.

"I feel we all learn from each other," she said. "We teach each other different skills and make each other better. The Youth Advisory Committee helps teen-agers develop different skills, and that makes us all stronger people."

Kimberly's hobbies include drawing portraits.

New YAC officers and leaders are set to step in to replace the outgoing team.



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