

National Conference of Christians and Jews Forms Youth Involvement Council

The National Conference of Christians and Jews has announced the formation of a Youth Involvement Council. The YIC is an attempt to help students in grades 9 - 12 develop leadership skills and become more involved with the community. This involvement will take the form of participation in government (on both the local and state levels), volunteer work, community projects, and the identification of youth-related issues. The YIC was created by local government to focus on the positive aspects of teenagers. Numerous agencies exist to help teens in crisis, but few resources exist to help youth develop leadership skills and community awareness. Funding for the project is being shared by the city and the county. (Total budget: \$24,750; city's share: \$16,500; county's share: \$8,250.)

NCCJ has hired Phillis Shoemaker to serve as the new YIC coordinator. Phillis was formerly a reporter for WAYS radio and was also a high

school teacher. Her responsibilities will include recruiting interested teenagers from both the public and private schools and facilitating special projects selected by the YIC members.

The goals for the first year of the program include the involvement of fifty teenagers. Possible projects include placing students on city and county government advisory boards, representing youth opinions and interests before local government elected officials, internships and service projects.

The idea of a youth involvement council isn't new. It was tried back in 1976, but fell short of expectations because of the lack of paid staff support. A survey conducted of 360 Charlotte-Mecklenburg high school students in 1983 indicated a strong interest in revitalizing the program. That survey also showed that local teenagers want to become more directly involved with local government and civic activities.

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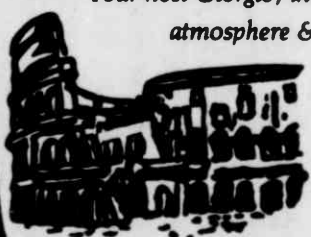
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11:30 a.m.

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