



For Immediate Release  
Media Contact: Lisa Desatnik, 513-984-5474

Preparing and Debating City Ordinances, Campaigning for Council  
Office,  
Lively Panel Discussions,  
Among Activities Planned at YMCA Youth in City Government  
Conference

For two days – October 7 and 8 at Duke Energy Center and Cincinnati City Hall – more than 100 students from more than 10 Cincinnati area high schools will be immersed in hands-on, interactive exercises all aimed at teaching them skills of responsible citizenship. At the YMCA Youth in City Government Conference, teens of diverse abilities, and socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds will be working together and independently to learn how government works and how they can be full participants in their community. **(A schedule of times and activities is below.)** *The theme that will be incorporated into this year's event is a quote made famous by former President Linden B. Johnson, "The stakes are too high to stay at home."*

Coordinated by the YMCA Youth City Council elected at the previous conference, the fall conference will include panel discussions with city leaders over issues impacting teens; workshops on debating and political journalism; a lively exercise on understanding cultural differences and breaking down the walls between countries; debating ordinances; and campaigning for 2008 to 2009 YMCA Cincinnati youth council and mayor positions. The conference will conclude at 1:00 p.m. on October 8 with a swearing in ceremony of the newly elected council in Cincinnati City Hall Council Chambers. The teen council will officially be introduced before the City of Cincinnati Council meeting beginning at 2:00 p.m. that day.

"These students are our future. It is so important for them to realize they have a voice, and to understand how governments and cities work. At our conference, they gain experience in research, critical thinking, public speaking, writing, communicating effectively with students who come from very different backgrounds and neighborhoods," said Jana Natterman, director of civic engagement for the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati.

The year-round YMCA Youth in City Government program gives Cincinnati students the opportunity to learn about local, state, national and international politics. It offers teen participants a venue to gain leadership skills, strengthen their ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively, and learn fellowship by working together with peers from diverse backgrounds.

With more than 83,000 members across the Tri-State, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati has grown to operate 111 program child care, CincyAfterSchool, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning sites in addition to its 17 branches and summer camp locations. The Association is the largest non-governmental, non-profit

community services organization in this area that is committed to helping everyone reach their God-given potential in spirit, mind, and body – regardless of their ability to pay. Each year tens of thousands of people from children to seniors are able to participate in YMCA programs and services because of financial assistance, including health and wellness, active older adult programs, youth and teen camp, swimming and water safety lessons , teen achievers, college readiness, and job preparedness. In 2007, nearly 10,000 kids participated with YMCA scholarships.

###

## **FACTS**

YMCA Youth in City Government Conference

### **WHEN and WHERE:**

October 7, 2008      Duke Energy Center      from 9 to 3:15 p.m.  
October 8, 2008      Cincinnati City Council Chamber (City Hall) and lunch at Cincinnati Club

### **AGENDA:**

OCTOBER 7

8:45              Breakfast

9:00              Youth Council Introductions, slide show (room 200)

9:10              Devotion      Christina Jones, Youth Council Member

9:20              Welcome      Chris Monzel, City Council Member

9:35              Commissioner David Pepper speaks

9:55              Ice Breakers

10:20             City Panel (Students will ask questions about issues important to them.)  
Sgt. William Bell – Cincinnati Police Department  
Jude Johnson – Parks Department  
Melanie Bates – School Board  
Chris Eilerman – City Manager’s Office  
Shawn Butler – Mayor’s Office

11:00             Workshops  
room – 201 – Debating  
room – 204 – Political Journalism

12:00             Lunch – working in groups on debating exercise

1:00              Biased Country Exercise – room 200

(This is a lively exercise where students will work in groups to develop solutions to hypothetical international problems.)

- 1:50 Ordinance Drafting/Submission  
room – 201 room – 202  
room – 203 room – 204  
(Students will work individually to create an ordinance and submit for review. Youth City Council will determine top 4 ordinances and those will be debated by students the next day.)
- 3:00 Closing session (room 200)

### **October 8, 2008**

- 8:30 Meet at City Hall
- 8:45 Candidate Speeches/Voting (Students will give their speeches for youth city council election)
- 9:40 Debate student ordinances
- 10:45 Leave for Cincinnati Club
- 11:00 Civic Engagement Luncheon
- 12:45 Return to City Hall
- 1:00 Swearing in ceremony with City Solicitor
- 1:30 Community forum
- 2:00 City council meeting (Youth city council will be introduced before the regular council meeting begins)