

Published May 26th, 2021

## Moraga Youth Involvement Committee gives teens a glimpse of civic engagement

By Vera Kochan



MYIC members sell concessions at a June 2019 fundraiser during Family Movie Night. Photo Jasmine Bateson

Like every aspect of day-to-day life, COVID had an impact on the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee's functional ability this past year. Typically, Parks and Rec relies on the MYIC members for participation in annual events such as the Holiday Tree Lighting, Breakfast with Santa, and Teddy Bear Tea - all of which were canceled this past year.

The only completed undertaking during the social distancing mandates was a goodie bag project for 72 Kaiser healthcare workers. "One of the student designed and led projects this term was to thank healthcare workers for their tireless efforts throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," explained staff liaison, Recreation Supervisor Jasmine Bateson, with the Parks and Recreation Department. "They developed the concept of goodie bags, came up with the contents, stuffed the bags, and coordinated with Kaiser to make the donation. The contents of the bags were funded by past MYIC fundraisers."

According to its website, "The purpose of the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee (MYIC) is to provide youth with opportunities for civic involvement, to implement/assist in activities and services in the community and to make appropriate recommendations to the Town Council on youth related issues."

The committee votes on prospective activities which are brought to the table by its individual members, the Parks and Rec Department, or outside community organizations. Even though this past term's endeavors were interrupted, committee members are looking forward to a new term that promotes advocacy, empowerment, a greater focus on environment and increased engagement in the town's government.

Students involved with MYIC are in grades 7-12, and make an annual term commitment of approximately eight months (between September through May). There is no school credit; merely the satisfaction each volunteer experiences by making their community a better place. This year's membership had 11 students.

"It was a weird year, and I wasn't really sure what we could do," Bateson said. However, MYIC members felt that much was accomplished through the pandemic by having productive discussions via Zoom, in which they gained a better understanding of how a government meeting was run and insight into the process.

MYIC members go through an application and interview procedure each new term. Parks and Rec then makes recommendations to the town council for appointments to the committee. Council Member David Stromberg serves as the council liaison for MYIC and reports to the council on MYIC matters. Any student wishing to join the 2021-22 term should check the town's website ( [www.moraga.ca.us](http://www.moraga.ca.us)) in mid-July.

The MYIC website is: [www.moraga.ca.us/313/Moraga-Youth-Involvement-Committee](http://www.moraga.ca.us/313/Moraga-Youth-Involvement-Committee).

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[back](#)

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