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Davis County Youth Council: BUILDING A BRIGHTER DAVIS COUNTY

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COVER PHOTO BY CLARA BEAN

PEERS WITH A PURPOSE: The Davis County Youth Council

BY GRACE PACHECO / PHOTOS BY CLARA BEAN



Every year, members of the Davis County Youth Council (DCYC) take on a challenge bigger than themselves. Rather than simply volunteering, these students work to identify real struggles affecting youth in Davis County and find meaningful ways to help their peers and community thrive.

Topics like mental health, healthy relationships, bullying prevention, school connection, self-care, and even sleep may sound like conversations reserved for adults or health professionals, but for the students involved in DCYC, these are deeply personal issues worth addressing. Through peer education, community events, and creative outreach, council members are helping strengthen connection and well-being in the community—one conversation at a time.

Supported by the Davis County Health Department, the student-led council brings together teens from across the county who share one common goal: making a difference. Each year, members gather feedback, listen to peers, review county health priorities, and use lived experiences to help determine where they can make the greatest impact. Guided by youth voices and firsthand perspectives, students work to better understand the challenges affecting their generation and how they can meaningfully support one another.



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Throughout the year, council members partner with trusted community organizations and local experts to better understand the issues affecting youth and gain practical tools to support their peers. Programs such as Live On Utah, the SELFIE Method, and Intermountain Health emotional wellness resources help students learn about topics ranging from self-care and emotional well-being to suicide prevention and healthy relationships. Members have also participated in training and workshops led by organizations such as Safe Harbor, Davis Behavioral Health, local libraries, and the Davis County Health Department, helping them better understand both the challenges young people face and the resources available within the community.

This year, the council turned its attention to something surprisingly powerful: sleep.

At the council's first planning meeting in January, members met with Davis County Health Director Brian Hatch to discuss the Health Department's

sleep initiative and offer insight from a youth perspective on how to encourage better sleep habits among teens. From there, students developed "Sleep Shapes Success," a campaign focused on helping others understand the connection between healthy sleep, emotional well-being, academic performance, and overall health.

Rather than relying on lectures or statistics alone, members are taking a creative, youth-centered approach by creating social media content, YouTube videos, educational materials, and community activities designed to make the message relatable and engaging. Throughout the year, outreach efforts have included community events like Safe Kids Day, where students connect with families and share practical ways to build healthier habits.

At the heart of the council's work is a simple but powerful idea: young people often understand one another in ways adults cannot. Teenagers understand the pressures their peers face—school stress, busy schedules, social dynamics, and the many challenges that come with growing up in today's world. That perspective allows council members to create messages that feel relevant, approachable, and authentic.

The Davis County Youth Council has also found creative ways to make important topics feel approachable and even fun. At one community event, members invited participants to paint rocks representing their unique "spark," creating a growing path of connection and belonging throughout the community. Other outreach has included interactive games, self-care





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activities, and youth-focused educational booths designed to encourage healthy habits in memorable ways.

For many students, however, the impact of the council extends far beyond service hours or leadership experience.

The reasons young people choose to join are as varied as the students themselves. Some are passionate about improving mental health support or helping peers feel seen and understood. Others are motivated by personal experiences, wanting to help others navigate struggles they have witnessed firsthand in their families, friendships, or schools. Many simply want to serve, connect with peers from across Davis County, and be part of something meaningful.

For some, the council offers an opportunity to make their voices heard and create positive change in the community. One student shared that they hoped to “help make our community a better place to be,” while another expressed a desire to “give back to the community and try to make a difference” while building leadership skills.



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For others, the motivation feels more personal. One student explained their passion for supporting peers by sharing, "School is super hard for high schoolers and honestly it can get super discouraging. I'd love an opportunity to help other youth around me." Another student shared a desire to help people feel like they belong and know they matter.

Just as meaningful are the friendships formed along the way. Students regularly mention the connections they

make with peers from different schools and communities—people they may never have crossed paths with otherwise but who share the same desire to serve and make a difference. As one returning member shared, "I really liked making friends with the other members and helping make my community a better place."

That combination of compassion and initiative is what makes the council so unique. These are students balancing school, sports, extracurricular activities,

jobs, and busy schedules, yet they continue showing up for something larger than themselves. They are learning how to lead now—listening, collaborating, and finding ways to improve the lives of the people around them.

The future of Davis County is bright—and growing brighter every day thanks to the young people willing to step up, reflect, support, and serve through the Davis County Youth Council.

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