
2019-2020 Monroe Youth in Government
End of Term Reflections



*The 2019-2020 Monroe Youth in Government representatives.
From left to right, Marissa Vosberg, Quinn Moorman, and Rebekah Rath.
Not pictured: Aidan Lambert, Francisco Ocampo, and Olivia Wiegel.*

“I have learned a lot during my time as a youth representative in Monroe’s Youth in Government program. My knowledge of local government has expanded, but I also learned a lot about myself. I learned how policy moves through the different levels and how many issues get resolved. I got to see how all of the governmental workings are interconnected and even how conflicts can arise. Local government is particularly political and my experience in it showed me how members of a governing body react to this fact. Besides learning simply about local government, I got a front row seat to witnessing human nature. Government is where I want to end up, so I imagined myself in the same scenarios many of you were placed in this year. I can’t lie, I would have made different choices for sure, but that’s politics. If anything, I learned more about myself as a leader, a citizen, and an individual throughout it all.

I have always been outgoing, but I truly feel over the course of this year I found my voice. I usually struggle with conflict because there is not always an easy solution. This year I learned communication is truly invaluable, even essential, to proper governing. I stood my ground in debate with adults, something not every teenager can say. My dissent was not in disrespect, just the opposite actually. Being placed in the situations I have been in this year gave me a glimpse of what my future holds, and it’s exciting. I have always had a passion for government and politics, which is why I applied to this program to begin with. My dad has always been super supportive of not only me, but any youth involvement in government. In fact, the entire Youth in Government program was his idea and helped



build it up to what it is today. I am thankful for the program organizers, staff, the mayor, and city council members, and of course my dad in making this term unforgettable for me. I have learned how strong I truly am as an individual and am ready for my next challenge.”

--Rebekah Rath

“Through the Monroe Youth in Government Program, I learned and developed various qualities of being a leader. The meetings I attended showed me various aspects of how to function within a community, with the most prominent aspect being that during discussion, a leader must be constantly thinking. Before this opportunity, I would often enter discussions thinking about what to say beforehand, and often getting caught details and failing to follow the conversation. Now, I realized and learned to cater my thoughts to the audience and community which is discussing. Responses and additions should be reflective of all the community’s input. Additionally, it is key to make any comments be interesting through humor or other means, as aspects such as these give you the attention of the audience.

The skill that I feel most developed [from] this program must be my social skills, especially in relation to group discussion, presentation, and speaking. Seeing myself grow in this aspect of everyday life has led me to develop a greater sense of confidence in my thoughts and opinions; it has taught that the things I believe or feel, although they may be wrong, are still valid ideas to introduce. Because of this greater sense of trust in myself, I believe it is now easier for me to share and contribute to life and the community as a whole than it was when I started.

Being frank, the idea of networking always felt like such an artificial aspect of life to me. Something that was only ever done for selfish desires, and never to the benefit of anyone else. As such, I never particularly cared much for the idea of a network before this program; however, the word “network” now has a new meaning to me. There will always be those who network for benefit which is a shame because I now see that networking should be greater than selfish gain. Through this program, I never intentionally networked in order to gain, yet a network did develop. This network developed through a sense of community. This network was not made; it was grown. A network should not be made for gain, but grown out of respect and trust for the people who support you for being you. Thus, from this program, I feel that I developed and became a part of this community’s network. This network is special, for each and every dot is an anchor that brings the community together to do more than the sum of its parts.

I do wish to thank you, the government, and the rest of the community for making this opportunity possible for the youths of this community. This special program is an opportunity to provide key experiences of growth to these youths and the community that supports them.”

--Francisco Ocampo



“The Youth in Government program has been great! After being in the program, I definitely have a better understanding of how policy is developed, how decisions are made at the city-level and the importance of being involved in your community and local government. Being in the program has helped me develop a new level of respect for those in local government as I now recognize the importance and magnitude of all the work that they do. Furthermore, being in this program has helped me develop my decision making skills by giving me real experience using information to make a decision. Overall, I am very thankful that I have been able to participate in this program and I am very thankful for everything I have learned through this program.”

--Marissa Vosberg

“Through my time as a participant in the Youth in Government Program, I have grown greatly as a leader. I think learning from experience and observation is very important, and every week I observed leaders in my community be confident in their ideas through this program and that’s something that I’m really glad to have witnessed. I was able to grow because I got to see people be passionate about their ideas and speak out for what they believed in. Those are skills I will be able to carry with me for the rest of my life. This program was also very beneficial because I was able to learn a lot about my community and how it runs. I think higher of the community now because I know all of the work that goes into running a community. I also have the utmost respect for and confidence in the people making decisions in my community.

I have definitely strengthened my skill and knowledge of how a meeting is properly run because of my experience this past year. I am a member of Student Senate at school, and the rules of order are something that we try to use, so seeing it at a higher level has definitely made me more comfortable with knowing what has to happen in a meeting. In Student Senate, I am also now able to correct people if they are not following the proper procedure. All of this helps the meetings run more efficiently.

I have expanded my network. All of the Alderpersons were very welcoming and made me very comfortable. I feel that if I have issues with the community, I can take them to any one of them. I am glad to have had the opportunity to meet all of them.”

--Olivia Wiegel