



Civic Action

A monthly update from the National Civic League

February 2016

Engaging Community to Support Youth



By Doug Linkhart, President of NCL

As we approach our annual [All-America City Awards](#) program for 2016, which focuses on youth success, it is amazing to see how many communities are organizing to support our young people.

In Salinas, California concerns about gang activity several years ago led to the formation of Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP). A coalition of more than 30 local organizations in Salinas held 120+ listening sessions to hear



Salinas youth at AAC 2015

from both adults and youth. From those efforts CASP created: a *Comprehensive Strategy for Community-Wide Violence Reduction for Salinas*. This strategy built leadership capacity and improved safety through community policing activities, a leadership academy, night walks, and collaboration to provide services to people in need.

Another example of a community coming together to support youth is the My Brother's Keeper program in Orlando, Florida. In 2012, the City of Orlando began a year-long conversation with neighborhood leaders, youth, schools, civic groups, businesses, faith leaders and others, who worked together to create an action plan to ensure that all young people in Orlando are positioned to succeed. Activities include replication of the Harlem Children's Zone model locally, establishment of 21st Century Learning Centers at every Title I middle school, and evidence-informed transformations of after-school and summer programs at 16 city recreation centers.

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Become an All-America City - apply today!

Share your community's efforts to ensure all children are healthy and supported to succeed in school and life. The deadline for 2016 applications is March 9. [APPLY TODAY](#)

Quick Links

[National Civic League](#)

[All-America City Award](#)

[Apply for AAC 2016](#)

[Become a member](#)

Tell Your Story: Apply to become an All-America City!
Do you have a story to tell about how your community supports young people? It's not too late to apply for this year's All-America City Awards and put your community and its efforts on behalf of young people on the map! The deadline for applications is March 9. [For more information and to apply click here](#)



We're Hiring!

The National Civic League is seeking an Office Manager and a Program Director for our Racial Equity programs. See the links below for more details and please SHARE with your friends and colleagues.

[Office Manager](#)

[Program Director, Racial Equity](#)

\$3,000 Award for Individuals Working on Health Equity

The National Civic League and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have joined forces to ***identify, celebrate, and reward individuals working to promote health equity in their community.***

The RWJF-National Civic League Health Equity Award recognizes and honors individuals building a culture of health by engaging the community to create systemic change for those most impacted by health disparities.

In addition to national recognition at the National Civic League's annual All-America City Awards and an invitation to participate in Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's yearly Health Equity Award annual learning and recognition event, ***winners will receive a \$3,000.00 prize.***

[Learn more about the Award and how to apply](#)

All-America City Spotlight: Tallahassee, FL

Last year, Tallahassee, Florida embarked on the road to becoming an All-America City for the second time. Following their last successful bid in 1999, Tallahassee knew they needed to present engaging projects that showcased the diversity of their community and their innovative approaches to problem solving. A local non-profit, [Distinguished Young Gentlemen \(DYG\)](#), committed to addressing the multi-dimensional challenges affecting young African-American males, was a natural fit for the award criteria.

The Tallahassee delegation also presented the first-of-its-kind city program - [Neighborhood REACH](#) - which began with a focus on helping low-income residents reduce their energy usage and costs and, at the urging of community partners and leaders, evolved so that, while at the home,

the team refers residents to other services such as Emergency Home Repair Program, Elder Care Services, or the Housing Authority.

Tallahassee's final highlighted project: [Cascades Park](#), not only alleviated major flooding issues, but rehabilitated the site of the city's founding through collaborative engagement and input from all sectors: including citizens' working groups, neighborhood commissions, community organizations, entertainers, local businesses and government.

Watch Tallahassee's 2015 All-America City Presentation to learn more about each of these incredible projects



Tallahassee
2015 All-America City Presentation

Spotlighting Santa Rosa's bold experiment in grassroots democracy *(A National Civic Review Case Study)*

Wracked by dissension between pro and anti-development forces on the city council, the political atmosphere in Santa Rosa, California, was becoming more and more adversarial. At the same time, neighborhood activists feared their voices weren't being heard at city hall.

Grassroots activists worked with local officials and community leaders to organize a citywide meeting of neighborhoods to "begin to build a different kind of partnership with the city." In a new case study of the "Santa Rosa Together" initiative, community organizer Hank Topper explores the potential of this effort to "rebuild democracy at the local level" to provide a "workable alternative" to the politics of dissension and disengagement. Read about this five-year experiment in democratic governance in the winter issue of the National Civic Review. [Read the article](#)

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