



Youth Foundations Victoria 2009 and beyond

1. Overview of Youth Foundations Victoria (YFV)

- YFV is an exciting initiative that helps young people make a real difference to their communities.
- YFV offers genuine opportunities for young people in Laverton to get involved.
- Young people in Laverton can look at the needs of their community and then make grants to other young people to run activities to benefit the community.
- The young people are also responsible for raising funds to those contributed by government and private partners. This group is referred to as the Young People's Action Committee.

YFV is in the 3rd year at Laverton. There are 8 YFV sites across Victoria and a network has been established between Facilitators.

Hobson's Bay City Council is the lead agency for the Laverton YFV and YFV operates from the Community Renewal Centre in Laverton.

2. Role of Facilitator

As a Facilitator it is my role to make things easier for the members of YPAC. Based on a youth participatory model, my aim is to guide, encourage and support young people to participate fully in the grant making process. They will participate in decision making, identifying and developing projects, opportunities to think big and come up with ideas to promote the positive face of young people and what they are doing in Laverton, acting as mentors to younger members, setting the way we will operate and conduct the group, and helping write actions plans and "how to" manuals.

This project must also benefit them and I will assist the members to build skills such as:

- Working in leadership and decision-making roles;
- Opportunities to attend training (paid for by YFV) to develop new skills;
- Building partnerships in the community;
- Volunteering based on stronger community connection that allows them to engage more effectively with community, peers and adults;

- Project management;
- Communications and marketing, promoting their work and projects;
- Developing increased confidence, enhanced self-esteem and
- Developing the attitudes and values that will enable them to effectively contribute to their communities.

Throughout all the skill building and community participation I aim to make it lots of fun to be part of and enjoy working together to achieve some great positive outcomes for both the young people involved and the Laverton community.

3. Past projects funded by YFV

Many of the projects funded through YFV have offered young people a chance to not only develop new skills but to also find opportunities to engage with the community, their school and enhance their self-esteem and confidence.

Laverton Street Art

For instance the Laverton Street Art was funded by YFV last year. The project was originally funded by YFV to help it get started and as it was such a success in 2008 a sustainable 12 month project was developed and co-funded by YFV and Arts for Kids Culture. The program was so well received by the local community in 2008 that they have been asked to paint murals for a range of local business and organisations. In 2009 the project will run a 12 month program of street art related workshops, events and exhibitions for young people.

Boyz Urban Art

Another successful project funded by YFV was Boyz Urban art. This project involved an 8 week workshop on street art. The artist was very well received by the boys involved and teachers reported the boys never missed a workshop. The boys involved were disengaged students from Laverton College who were at risk of leaving school. I attended the Youth week presentations on 30 March and met the boys involved. The pride they showed in displaying their work, having it recognised and their engagement with teachers, the artist and other community members was incredibly positive.

Teachers reported to me that these boys have turned around since being involved in the project and they are keen to be involved in a mentoring capacity for others who would like to participate in similar workshops. This group will also be attending a forum on Graffiti and the Law.

Girls Choice Group

Another project was the Girls Choice Group from Laverton College run through the Laverton Community Centre & Neighbourhood House. The project involved planning and developing a program to provide meals and educate young Mums about healthy eating so they can prepare healthy meals for themselves and their children. The students involved developed skills in leadership and mentoring as well as health promotion and community building. The project also offered an insight for the students into the realities of being a young Mum.

4. Developing a sustainable model and future directions for YFV

It is my aim through YFV to develop a sustainable program to provide young people with ongoing opportunities to develop new skills, make significant connections with their community, gain increased self-esteem and confidence, engage more effectively with their families, school, peers and community and feel proud of where they live and be able to deliver positive messages about young people in Laverton.

A proposal was sent to Laverton College recently requesting that a group of interested students (from the Youth Forum) be invited to participate in YFV as the new YPAC and meetings be held at the school. This proposal was accepted and in Term 2 an initial meeting will be held. The school is very supportive of the project. Laverton College is also considering my proposal that involvement in YPAC be included as part of their Applied Learning curriculum.

Whilst one of the first priorities will be to commence the grants process, from this group I am also wanting to develop leadership and mentoring skills. It is hoped students will attend workshops on grant making, public speaking, leadership skills to help them with their role as YPAC members.

YPAC will be based on a youth participatory model where all members will be encouraged to be involved in the decision making process, express their opinions, contribute ideas and develop our terms of reference and codes of conduct.

It is my intention to develop formal models from this group that assist in establishing workable policy and procedures for future development of YPAC.