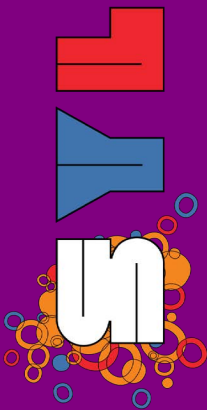




SUWANEE'S APPROACH TO SUWANEE YOUTH LEADERS

City of
Suwanee
georgia

SUWANEE
YOUTH
LEADERS



**SYL won the
Create Community
Award for Educational
Excellence presented
by the Atlanta Regional
Commission.**

The City of Suwanee's approach to Youth Engagement was born of the 20/20 Strategic Plan and centers on building genuine and meaningful relationships with schools and youth in the Suwanee area through our award winning Suwanee Youth Leaders (SYL) program. The mission of SYL is to empower young leaders to connect inside the community and make a positive impact outside the classroom.

SUWANEE YOUTH LEADERS:

Suwanee Youth Leaders is a City sponsored, community-based, nine month leadership program for high school students who live in the Suwanee area. The program is open to sophomores and juniors who attend public, private, and home-based schools and who live in the North Gwinnett, Collins Hill, or Peachtree Ridge clusters.

Students are selected through a competitive process prior to being chosen as SYL participants. Applications are reviewed by City staff and a committee of their peers (made up of immediate past program participants). In addition, City staff seeks the advice of school administrators in the selection of the SYL class. Finally, City staff makes the final decision based upon the strength of the application, and the advice given by both the student selection committee and school administrators.

FOCUS AREAS:

- **Development of Leadership Skills** - Suwanee Youth Leaders gives local high school students genuine exposure to local initiatives and community leaders in the public, private, and non-profit fields. In addition, the students are given a real world stage to plan and implement SYL driven and supported city events. This responsibility includes planning, budgeting, marketing, and coordination of logistics. The hard skill and soft skill development which takes place throughout the SYL program is unique and deeply valued by our program graduates and local high school administrators.
- **Increase Youth Civic Awareness and Community Engagement** - Since the outset of the program, SYL has sought to actively engage our local youth in their community. Initially, the penultimate experience with SYL was student volunteering at Suwanee Fest. Throughout the years that event engagement has grown to include August Concert, Food Truck Friday, Glow in the Park, etc. In addition, SYL gives students the unique opportunity to learn more about the role of local government in their home community. Students have also been included on the advisory board for the Downtown Suwanee Masterplan and Public Art Masterplan, Strategic Planning Committee for the Gwinnett County Library System, and taken part in the Great Exchange on Transportation.
- **Cultivation of Community Relationships** - SYL is another outlet for ongoing communication with our valuable partners at the local schools, the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, the State Legislature, Gwinnett County, etc. Key staff and elected officials from our partner organizations make appearances during the program to both interact with and teach our students valuable leadership and life lessons. Suwanee Youth Leaders is a program many of our partners seek to take part in and support.