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# West Roxbury Bulletin

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Volume 5, Issue 12

March 24, 2005



The Bulletin

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## Calling for teens to take charge

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If you are a junior or senior in high school and interested in teen issues and programs, you may be the person Mayor Thomas Menino is looking for.

Mayor Menino is accepting applications for young leaders to take part in the Mayor's Youth Council, a program he established in 1994 to allow young Bostonians the opportunity to have an active role in addressing youth issues.

The council members are junior and senior volunteers who are selected annually to reach out to Boston teens and let them know about existing opportunities within the city. Council members also make suggestions concerning improvements the city can make in youth oriented efforts.

The Parkway has four representatives on the council, Nicole Norton and Colin Donnelly represent West Roxbury, and Priscille Beaubais and Brittany Canniff represent Roslindale.

Norton, a senior at Ursuline Academy in Dedham, has worked on initiatives to protect the safety of the city's youth.

"The whole group would meet twice a month and we would try to work on youth programming, that's the general idea," Norton said. "For the first half of the year we worked on neighborhood safety. We met with (Boston Police) Commissioner O'Toole and (Boston Police) Superintendent (Paul)

Joyce, then we met with the mayor and then we discussed (safety issues) with our forum that we had also."

Norton said the council discussed areas of the city and places on Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority property they felt needed more lighting and other safety measures.

"We got a lot of feedback from a lot of youth in the city," Norton said. "Then we worked with people from the MBTA to try and get those issues addressed."

Norton said she came up with a flyer to help youth feel safe on MBTA property.

"I made a flyer called 'Protect Yourself,'" Norton said. "It was just giving people the number for the MBTA tip line so anyone that felt like they were in danger could call those numbers. ... That way kids could report things anonymously if they felt like they were threatened."

Donnelly said the experience of being a council member is equally as rewarding as it is challenging.

"It's definitely a great experience if you're willing to make the commitment," Donnelly said. "You get to meet a lot of interesting people and learn a lot about the City of Boston. ... If someone's really interested in doing it, then they have to commit themselves fully."

A junior at Roxbury Latin School, Colin said he plans to re-apply for a seat on the council

again this year.

Roslindale representative Brittany Canniff said one of the greatest challenges she faced was getting Roslindale youth notified of things happening at the Roslindale Community Center during her outreach work there.

"You do a lot of the outreach programs where you are responsible for working with local community centers," said Canniff, who is a senior at Boston Latin School. "There's some really cool stuff out there that's just not getting properly advertised (in terms of programs)."

To be eligible, teens must be Boston residents entering their junior or senior year of high school or an alternative program the following September. Students should have knowledge of teen programs and issues.

Duties for Youth Council Members include attending two evening meetings per month at City Hall, participating in Youth Council meetings with Mayor Menino and city leaders, conducting ongoing outreach to peers and youth programs and participating in skill building workshops. It's a time commitment of approximately 10 hours per month, according to the Mayor's Press Office.

The deadline for new applicants is April 15 and the application can be found online at <http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc>. Applicants will be contacted in April for group interviews.