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## West Park Named 2026 Youth Council Excellence Award Winner

*Youth Council recognized by Florida League of Cities for community initiative*

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**TALLAHASSEE, FL** – The **Florida League of Cities (FLC)**, the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments, announced the **City of West Park Youth Council** as one of three winners of the 2026 Youth Council Excellence Award. The annual competition recognizes exceptional youth council initiatives or projects that have made significant contributions to their local municipalities.

Municipal youth councils are special councils that typically serve as advisory boards to the local governments. They are composed of high school students within the city and are sometimes referred to as youth corps, teen advisory boards, or mayor’s youth councils.

The City of West Park Youth Council earned the 2026 Youth Council Excellence Award for its Love Baskets initiative, a community service project that brought comfort to children hospitalized at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. All 12 Youth Council members actively planned, promoted, and assembled 24 curated baskets filled with age-appropriate items, including coloring books, stuffed animals, blankets, and fidget toys. Through a donation drive with collection boxes at City Hall, Mary Saunders Park, and McTyre Park, the Council gathered nearly 300 donated items — a testament to the power of youth-led civic action and community compassion.

"The City of West Park Youth Council has shown us that compassion and leadership know no age limit," said **FLC President Holly D. Smith, Vice Mayor of Sanibel**. "Through their Love Baskets initiative, these remarkable students went above and beyond to ensure that children facing the challenges of hospitalization felt seen, valued, and supported by their community. I am incredibly proud of the West Park Youth Council for proving that even the simplest gestures can leave a lasting and meaningful impact when young leaders act with purpose and heart. With young leaders like these championing meaningful initiatives in their communities, the future of Florida’s cities is bright."

The Riviera Beach Youth Council and the Pembroke Pines Youth Advisory Board were also named winners in the statewide competition. Contest winners will receive a monetary award of \$500, a trophy, and be featured online in the League’s Quality Cities (QC) magazine as well as on the League’s website and social media outlets.

For more information on the winning projects, visit [flcities.com/youth-councils](http://flcities.com/youth-councils).

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*Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida's municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida's cities, which are formed and governed by their citizens. The League believes in "Local Voices Making Local Choices," which focuses on the impact citizens and city leaders have in improving Florida's communities. For more information, visit [flcities.com](http://flcities.com).*