

Attachment 1:

Annual Report of the
Oakland Youth Commission





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I. Oakland Youth Commission Appointees

Name	District	Officer Roles	Ad-hoc committee(s)	Years Served
Sarah Turley	1	-	Climate Justice	1
Airieanna Murrell	2	Social Media	Youth Vote; Climate Justice	1
Quincy Russell	3	Secretary	Youth Homelessness; Restorative Justice	1
Francesca Berlow	4	-	Youth Vote	4
Harper Valentine	5	-	Youth Engagement	4
Emily Chachagua	6	Ethics	Youth Homelessness	1
Brian Morales	7	Graphic Design	Youth Vote	1
Hayden Thompson	At-Large	Co-Chair	Climate Justice	2
Bria Woodland	At-Large	Co-Chair	Restorative Justice	1
Mia Hatfield	At-Large	Organizing	Youth Engagement; Restorative Justice	2
Sophia Hesseltine	At-Large	-	Climate Justice	1
Meklit	At-Large	-	Climate Justice	1
Bryce	At-Large	-	Climate Justice	1
Nathan Li	At-Large	Graphic Design	Youth Engagement; Restorative Justice	1
Kendy Mendoza	At-Large	-	Restorative Justice	1
Cassandra Young	At-Large	Social Media	-	0.5
Romero Wesson	At-Large	Operations	Youth Homelessness	0.5

II. Letter from Co-Chair of the Youth Commission

Dear City Council,

In the 38th year of the Youth Commission, we have worked to advance our mission of representing and advocating for Oakland's 60,000 youth.

This year marked a time of change and new beginnings for the Youth Commission. We welcomed 13 new commissioners, along with our new Manager, Sara Tiras. The new commissioners have expanded the range of voices that make up our group, with an increase in BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and OUSD representation.

We started this term with a weeklong summer retreat and later held a weekend winter retreat. In March, we returned to in person commission meetings for the first time since 2020. After changing our bylaws and sending quarterly attendance check-ins, we saw a 30%+ increase in attendance across our 17 meetings this year.

Our ad-hoc committees focused on a range of subjects including Youth Vote, Youth Homelessness, Climate Justice, and Restorative Justice.

The Commission fortified our partnerships with local leaders by meeting with Oakland City Councilmembers, City Staff including the Oakland Fire Department, Department of Violence Prevention, and the Climate Resiliency Sustainability Division. We connected with various community organizations such as Sogorea Te' Land Trust, Youth Vs Apocalypse, and Centro Legal de la Raza. We continued to work in our long-standing coalitions with Oakland kids First, Californians for Justice, All City Council, AYPAL, and the CTE Hub.

In the coming year, we look forward to continuing this work to develop our skills and knowledge around local government, and working to improve the lives of Oakland Youth.

Thank you,

Hayden Thompson
Co-Chair of the 2022-23 Youth Commission

III. Youth Leadership Development

A. Commission Meetings and Internal Trainings

The Oakland Youth Commission (OYC) is a leadership development program as well as a working group to advocate for change within local government. The OYC 2022 – 2023 term was comprised of an almost entirely new commission, which required a robust effort to onboard, train, and develop them as new leaders. Our commissioners ranged in age from 14 – 21 and had various experiences and backgrounds in political work and organizing.

The OYC staff planned and convened several workshops designed to expand OYC member knowledge and skills necessary for their effectiveness in their new and continuing roles. Our internal workshops were an integral component of this year’s programming and required a considerable time commitment from our commissioners.

Topics included:

- Local Government 101
- Campaign Building 101
- Robert’s Rules
- Adulthood and Youth Empowerment
- Public Comment
- Restorative Justice 101
- Community Based Research
- Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

In addition, to the on-boarding and training, the OYC invited several guest speakers from the City of Oakland and community-based organizations to present, engage and learn from the Youth Commission. Our regularly scheduled OYC meetings included presentations and trainings from the following groups:

- Sogorea Te Land Trust
- Centro Legal de la Raza
- Department of Violence Prevention
- Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Division
- Youth vs Apocalypse
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)
- Urban Strategies
- Oakland Fire Department
- Youth Advisory Board

B. Leading Youth Empowerment and Adulthood Trainings in the Community

OYC youth members and staff worked together to develop a training on Adulthood and Youth Empowerment. The first training was offered to City of Oakland employees through the Citywide Training Forum on Wednesday, November 30, 2022. 50 city employees registered and participated in the training session.

Hart's Ladder of Youth Empowerment provided the framework for the presentation and discussion. Through this lens, participants gained a new perspective on true youth advocacy, and what it truly means to be empowered as a young person. Youth presenters facilitated the discussion among participants to help clarify the difference between oppression and prejudice and how adulthood functions as a system of oppression and tokenism.

The training was interactive, challenging current perceptions and provided a forum for participants to think about, or think back on, their perspectives as young people through conversations about times they were made to feel marginalized by adults as youth as well as times they felt empowered as young people and the difference between those experiences. The final component of the training provided participants with a list of ways to incorporate youth perspective in their work as adults.

The feedback captured on the training evaluations completed was overwhelmingly positive. We were very proud of the evaluation responses received, including one employee who shared "In over 10 years of working for the City of Oakland, this was the best training I have ever attended."

Commission members later refined the training for a youth audience and presented at the "All City Council's Ethnic Studies Conference" for Middle School students at UC Berkeley on March 16, 2023. OYC's third presentation was at the "All City Council's Youth Action Summit Conference" for OUSD High School Students on April 27, 2023. Our plan is to offer the Adulthood and Youth Empowerment training annually to city employees with the goal of promoting and broadening meaningful and empowering forms of youth engagement in all city departments.

Screenshot from our Citywide Youth Engagement training on November 30, in which we had 50 adult participants attend.



C. Restorative Justice Certification with Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY)

The Commission has the option to establish ad-hoc committees in areas of interest to further the work in a particular focus area. Efforts engaged in by the Commission over the last few years, have illustrated the need for an increased focus on Restorative Justice in the City of Oakland. This year the Commission was provided an opportunity to partner with Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) who offered a series of trainings to 10 youth commissioners. The trainings in total amounted to a total of twelve hours over the course of three dates: October 24, November 14, and December 10.

Through the trainings, youth commissioners obtained the necessary skills to become “great circle keepers” (GCK). Youth Commissioners who successfully completed the training series and received certification had opportunities to practice facilitating circles with the Commission each month. Gaining this skill allowed youth commissioners to build a sense of community within each other and foster a deeper understanding of the significance and power of this process and tool. The skills gained through the training enhanced the OYCs ability to be better equipped to develop strategies and advocate for restorative justice policies.

The Commission will continue to lead circles and strengthen our skills as an approach for addressing these complex problems through harm reduction and healing amongst ourselves, in schools and with our community of youth.

In addition, our staff held one restorative circle between two youth to resolve a conflict that emerged during the term. The circle was restorative and healing for all parties.

We are excited to continue to use this tool to build the relationships and skills among our youth commissioners to utilize in our internal operations as well as how we approach solving complex social issues.

*Photo from our Circle Keeper training with Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth
Photo taken at the RJOY office on December 12, 2022.*



IV. Youth Voice in City Affairs

The Youth Commission had several opportunities to speak to the community and have youth voice included in city affairs.

In the wake of the school shootings at BayTech and Madison Park High Schools in the first few weeks of the school year, the Youth Commission devoted time at our general commission meeting to discuss these events and school safety. It was a heavy, emotional, and powerful meeting that resulted in three youth commissioners speaking to The Oaklandside to share their perspectives on school safety. You can read the full article [here](https://oaklandside.org). <https://oaklandside.org> [After Rudsdale shooting, Oakland students say 'this is not okay' \(oaklandside.org\)](https://oaklandside.org)

On November 7, 2022, at the end of the election season, KQED did a feature on first time voters and interviewed one of our commissioners, Romero Wesson, on his perspective on voting in Oakland's mayoral race. Romero was also able to speak on how adultism shapes our societal views on young voters and the importance of youth flexing their voting power. You can read the full article [here](https://www.kqed.org/news/). <https://www.kqed.org/news/> ['We Can Make Some Real Change': Oakland Voters Weigh In on the Issues, Candidates | KOED](https://www.kqed.org/news/)

The San Francisco Chronicle ran a story on the recent health and wellness survey results of Oakland youth, with a focus on the impacts of violence. The Chronicle interviewed Airieanna Murrell, who highlighted the importance of restorative justice being integrated into Oakland schools. You can read the full article [here](https://www.sfchronicle.com/). <https://www.sfchronicle.com/> [Oakland teens see more violence, feel sadder than U.S. counterparts \(sfchronicle.com\)](https://www.sfchronicle.com/)

In December, newly elected Mayor Sheng Thao requested the Youth Commission Co-Chairs to speak at her inauguration reception. Our Co-Chairs, Hayden Thompson, and Bria Woodland, co-wrote the speech emphasizing Mayor Thao's commitment to Oakland youth and our pride in her election as a younger woman of color. As youth representing this city, it was powerful to have our words honored in such an important space.



In April, our Co-Chair Bria Woodland was invited to speak at the event sponsored by the Mayor's office to reactivate the city plaza. Bria, also a poet herself, was honored to have the opportunity to share Oakland Love Life, a poetic piece written by KevChoice, to welcome back city employees.

V. Policy Work

A. Youth Vote

The Youth commission continues to be an active member of the Oakland Youth Vote Coalition. As part of the Youth Vote ad-hoc committee, Brian Morales, Airieanna Murrell, and Francesca Berlow worked together with members of other organizations such as Oakland Kids First, AYPAL, OUSD's All City Council, and Californians for Justice to push for the proper implementation of Measure QQ and give power to Oakland youth. Measure QQ secured voting rights for youth ages 16 and 17 who are Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students in OUSD district elections. Although youth were not able to vote in this year's school board elections, the coalition continued to engage youth through voter education and registration.

Candidate Forum

The Youth Vote ad-hoc committee assisted in the planning of a youth-led candidate forum for the OUSD school board candidates of Districts 2, 4, and 6. The successful forum was hosted at Fremont High School on October 18, 2022. Leading up to the forum, Commissioners Brian Morales, Airieanna Murrell, and Francesca Berlow played an important role in logistics planning with selecting the site to host the event and ensuring accommodations for guests such as food and translation services.

In addition to the youth-led candidate forum Commissioner Francesca Berlow conducted a voter registration booth at the forum for anyone aged 16 or higher to register or pre-register to vote, and Commissioner Airieanna Murrell served as timekeeper for the candidates' speaking time. Many of the commissioners and their families attended the event, and asked questions as audience members to the candidates. OYC used social media and the OYC website to share video clips from the candidates to help students gain more knowledge of the candidates and where they stand on the pressing issues of Oakland schools.



Youth Commissioners and staff members pose for a picture after the Youth-Led Candidate Forum at Fremont High School on October 18, 2022.

Voter Registration



The Youth Vote ad-hoc committee divided into affinity groups based on school site to plan presentations, booths, and more, to inform high school students about voter registration and get them registered or pre-registered to vote for upcoming elections. Commissioner Airieanna Murrell collaborated with other students at Oakland High School to get students registered, Commissioner Brian Morales conducted a voter registration booth at Madison Park Academy and Commissioner Francesca Berlow (pictured left) held presentations in various classrooms at Oakland School For The Arts. Together

the Youth Vote Coalition successfully registered or pre-registered over 50 Oakland students to vote.

B. Youth Homelessness

Career Technical Education (CTE) TAY Hub Coalition

The CTE TAY Hub, is a housing complex initiative where transitional age youth who are housing insecure can live and receive a variety of resources to help them through the pivotal transition from youth to adulthood. The housing campus will provide college and career counseling, mental health services, and a variety of other wrap around services. The Youth Commission continues to work with the CTE TAY Hub coalition to plan the design of this housing project and advocate for continued investment and funding in seeing this project to fruition. We had three youth commissioners work with this coalition, Quincy Russell, Emily Chachagua and Romero Wesson. Their focus included three aspects of planning this year:

1. Public comment to secure the OUSD building at 1025 2nd Ave as the future location for the site. Commissioners Quincy Russell, Emily Chachagua and Romero Wesson.
2. Participation in the development and social media distribution of survey questions via social media to support The CTE Hub launch of a youth survey focused on learning what career pathways were most interesting to TAY youth. Commissioners Quincy Russell, Emily Chachagua and Romero Wesson.
3. Public comment in support of securing funding for the CTE Hub. Commissioner Quincy Russell and members of the CTE Hub spoke out in support of the Hub and the cultural impact it would have on the community and youth of color as a strategy for moving towards an end of youth incarceration.

Youth Homelessness Task Force Implementation

Last April 2022, City Council gave their approval for the creation of the Youth Homelessness Task Force. This past year, OYC Staff met monthly with Youth Advisory Board Staff to figure out next steps for implementation of the Task Force. In May, we determined the Taskforce will be housed within the County's Continuum of Care Youth Committee.

C. Climate Justice

Supporting Sequoia Point Land Back to Sogorea Te Land Trust

In October 2022, guest speakers from the Sogorea Te' Land Trust came and spoke to the Youth Commission about the history of Ohlone people and the work of the Sogorea Te. We conversed about the importance of land rematriation to our indigenous communities, specifically the proposed return of 5 acres of land at Sequoia Point. The Youth Commission then voted to write a letter to city council in support of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust in giving back land to the Ohlone People, every commissioner supported our letter and put in effort to ensure ours and their voices were heard.

Co-Sponsoring Youth Speak Out Event

The Youth Commission partnered with Youth Vs Apocalypse to co-sponsor a Youth Speak Out event in Frank Ogawa Plaza on February 24, as part of the Global Climate Strike Fridays. Sarah Turley and Mia Hatfield wrote invitation letters to city council members to attend the event and participate in a Q & A session. Several youth commissioners spoke at the event, as well as over 20 Oakland youth leaders. At the event OYC hosted a booth for anyone attending to submit questions for city council members. Councilmembers Reid, Ramachandran, and Bas were able to attend and engage the audience. More than a few hundred Oakland students attend despite the rainy weather.



Youth Commissioners and staff pose at our booth in Frank Ogawa Plaza engaging Oakland youth in crafting questions for council members.

Public Comment – No Coal in Oakland

Sophia Hesseltine and Aireanna Murrell wrote public comments for the City Council Meeting on May 16, 2023, regarding the possible settlement between the City and Autumn Wind over the City's ban on coal passed in 2016. Although Aireanna had to leave the event early, Sophia along with members of Youth vs. Apocalypse gave public comment, urging the Council Members to reject the settlement with Autumn Wind due to its potential to allow coal to be exported through the Port of Oakland.

Oakland General Plan Feedback

On May 1, 2023, the Commission heard from Megan Imperial and several youth fellows from the Urban Strategies Council about the Oakland General Plan, especially about climate justice issues such as homelessness, illegal dumping, flooding, access to healthy grocery stores, and allergies from tree pollen. Commissioners had the opportunity to give feedback on the Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan.

D. Miscellaneous Endorsements

Supporting Healthy Food at Check Out (HOPS)

On February 27, youth leaders from Healthy Food at Check Out came to present to the Youth Commission at our General Meeting. We discussed the issue and voted to endorse the proposal and a group of commissioners wrote a letter of support to City Council on March 7, 2023.

Support for State Bill AB 800 Workplace Readiness Week

AB 800 would create a “Workplace Readiness Week” in California high schools to educate students on their rights as workers, and their explicit rights as employed minors. Young people are often unaware of their rights at work, leaving them vulnerable to many kinds of exploitation and abuse at work, including wage theft, unsafe working conditions and workplace injuries, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Therefore, it is essential for young Californians entering the workforce to be thoroughly educated on their rights as workers, and how to join or organize a union in their workplace so that they do not face exploitation from their employers.

Support for Oakland Teachers OEA Strike

On October 31st, the contracts of Oakland teachers' expired, leaving many teachers to an unresolved conflict. The Oakland Youth Commission fully supported all 3,000 teachers, counselors, nurses, speech therapists, psychologists, and social workers of the Oakland Education Association.

VI. Looking Ahead

The Youth Commission's work with the Oakland Youth Vote will continue to push for County level implementation in time for the 2024 elections. Next year's work will focus on engaging youth on the OUSD school board election for District 5 through another candidate forum, as well as piloting our civic engagement curriculum in Oakland high schools to prepare Oakland youth to be ready and engaged voters in 2024.

The Youth Commission will continue our work with the implementation phase of our Youth Homelessness Task Force with the County. We aim to have 2-4 youth commissioners join the task force (now called the COC Youth Committee). We will likely continue to partner with CTE Hub Coalition and make sure our youth are involved in giving input on the design and planning for the Hub's services.

The Youth Commission secured \$100,000 from City Council to hire consultants to lead us in Youth participatory Action Research (YPAR) project evaluating youth programs funding and provided by the City of Oakland. After significant delays in being able to hire a consultant, we are in process of contracting our chosen consultant, and have formed a partnership with Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) to lead the needs assessment portion of their strategic plan. We will begin the work in the next term.

The Youth Commission will vote next Fall whether to continue our work on Climate Justice or if we would like to take on new areas of interest.

We will continue to utilize our restorative justice tools next year with regular community building circles and restorative circles when conflict arises.

The OYC had 10 youth commissioners leave at the end of this term. During Spring 2023, we initiated recruitment efforts, completed the interview and selection process, and will recommend in 10 new commissioners for the next term in September 2023.

The Commissions two part time staff members completed their hours of service (Management Intern; Student Trainee) for their respective positions in June 2023. OYC has begun the recruitment process to fill the staff vacancies.

VII. Youth Commissioner Reflections

Commissioner	Hayden Thompson	Bria Woodland
Role	Co-Chair Commissioner At-Large	Co-Chair Commissioner At-Large
Committees	Executive & Climate Justice	Executive & Restorative Justice
Reflection	I have witnessed the power of youth voice and gained a greater understanding of local politics. Meeting with council members, the mayor, and community members has been a rare experience that has shown me how the City operates and how to best support Oakland.	My biggest take-away would have to be that youth voices are valued in political spaces.
What hard skills did you gain?	I have worked a lot on creating agendas, writing speeches, and planning events. All of these will be useful for future speaking engagements or leading teams in the workplace or in my community.	During my term as a commissioner I have strengthened my facilitation skills, communication skills and formal writing skills. These skills will help me as I move forward in my journey as a social justice activist and community organizer. They will also support me when I start my journey in politics.
What soft skills did you gain?	Based on my experience with the Youth Commission, my social and political awareness has increased dramatically based on all of the meetings, conversations, and events that I have been involved in. I plan to stay engaged with local and state level politics and continue stepping into public facing roles after my time with the Commission.	I think the main skill I gained were my social and political awareness skills because I learned how to pay more attention to key things happening in my community.

Commissioner	Brian Morales	Sarah Turley
Role	D7 Commissioner, Graphic Design Officer	Commissioner At-Large
Committees	Executive & Youth Vote	Climate Justice
Reflection	<p>The biggest take-away from my participation on the Youth Commission was definitely my experiences in the Oakland Youth Vote Coalition. I gained new perspectives by working with youth from other organizations with similar goals, which was a very inspiring and motivating space to be in. One of the experiences that is mostly sticking out to me is when we broke into groups based on schools, to plan and execute methods to get youth ages 16 and higher to register to vote. This stuck out to me because my community is very underrepresented, so being able to give them a chance to voice their opinions was amazing. Of course there are a plethora of take-aways from my time with the Commission but to me that is one of the biggest things.</p>	<p>My favorite part of being on OYC was hearing the experiences of the guest speakers and fellow commissioners. I've learned so much about the experiences of the people around me. For example I will never look at immigration law the same way after learning what (I might be wrong on the technical term) unaccompanied minors go through in the court system. I also learned a lot about the school to prison pipeline. Being on OYC has fundamentally changed my world view and inspired me to keep learning about these issues.</p>
What hard skills did you gain?	<p>Some hard skills that I have gained during my time with the Commission are skills such as event planning, graphic design, decision making, and leadership. As mentioned above, as part of our work within our subcommittees, I experienced the event planning process and definitely learned different methods of getting people to come to an event and avoiding any obstacles. We also exercised decision making and leadership with decisions made during commission meetings around support of certain campaigns, etc. I was also Graphics Design Officer for the Executive Committee, so I learned graphic design from concept to visualization. I will use these skills after OYC to help me plan community events and help me be of service to my community.</p>	<p>For the first time I got to write formal letters to city council and other city officials, learning how to address them and what words to use to be persuasive was very valuable. Another skill I learned was how to promote events. Promoting engagement in protests or rally events by figuring out how to get people's attention.</p>
What soft	<p>Some soft skills that I have gained while on the Commission are definitely problem solving, personal confidence,</p>	<p>My political awareness and political interest definitely increased. Before joining OYC, I</p>

<p>skills did you gain?</p>	<p>communication, and increased interest in local politics. Problem solving is a crucial part of being a commissioner as there are many problems that come up ranging from approval of absences to planning of work to be done in subcommittees. The presentations from local organizations also definitely increased my interest in local politics and increased my personal confidence in my ability to push for change.</p>	<p>did not know about the different kinds of elections or what a city council meeting looked like. Learning Roberts Rules and how to give public comment has increased my personal confidence when dealing with politics. I also learned about all kinds of organizations in Oakland trying to make a change in local politics.</p>
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Commissioner	Harper Valentine	Francesca Berlow
Role	D5 Commissioner	D4 Commissioner
Committees	Youth Empowerment	Youth Vote
Reflection	<p>This past year on OYC, I have gained a ton of insight into the issues that we, as young people really care about. For example, near the end of the year, we did a lot of work surrounding the environment and I learned a lot about how environmental injustices can result in profound health issues for disadvantaged communities. OYC has given me a lot of knowledge about how injustices intersect.</p>	<p>I really gained an understanding of how important civic education is, and I loved working with oyc and the clc to bring my peers information about the school board election that they would not have had access to otherwise since they've never been taught where and how to look for the information.</p>
What hard skills did you gain?	<p>I have learned how to give public comment, how to write an advocacy letter, and how to lead large groups of people in youth engagement trainings both in person and online.</p>	<p>I have gotten really good at backwards planning for events. I have really gotten great at setting realistic goals for the time that I have for the event. I would like to continue to organize after oyc and I think being able to set a schedule and set realistic goals makes all the difference when planning an event.</p>
What soft skills did you gain?	<p>Every year on the commission, I have learned how to work with, get to know, and connect with a new group of young people. I also think OYC teaches commissioners to uplift one another, cultivating a space that allows for growth and confidence.</p>	<p>I think oyc has really been an informational tool in just understanding how city government really works. I have also really gained confidence in my ability to share the knowledge I gain through the commission with my peers and other youth in Oakland and has helped me think more critically about problems in government.</p>

Commissioner	Kendy Mendoza	Sophia Hesseltine
Role	Commissioner At-Large	Commissioner At-Large
Committees	Restorative Justice & Climate Justice	Climate Justice
Reflection	My biggest takeaway has been learning how to be a better advocate and finding ways to serve my community. Another big takeaway from participating in the Youth Commission has been learning how the local government system operates. I have gained a lot of information on varying topics from countless guest speakers and presentations.	Reflecting on the past year, my biggest take away from the Youth Commission has been the power of grassroots organizing, especially when it comes to the youth. Through our collaboration with Youth v. Apocalypse, I got to see first-hand the impact that climate strikes and making demands to our public officials has. Before this year, I had never attended a direct action, and being on the Youth Commission has sparked my interest in being more involved in Oakland activism on the ground.
What hard skills did you gain?	A hard skill I have gained from being on the Commission has been getting a restorative justice certificate. Aside from using this skill in commission-related activities, I have used this skill in college and when working with elementary school children. Another hard skill I have obtained through the Commission has been participating in a campaign through different forms.	One hard skill I gained from the Commission was how to write and deliver a public comment. Although I only gave two (one in person and one online), both times I gave a public comment gave me the opportunity to conduct research and formulate a concise response on an issue I care about. This exercise gave me a lot of insight on the importance of phrasing your words in a way that is direct and impactful, which is definitely something I will use in the future.
What soft skills did you gain?	A major soft skill I have gained through my participation with the commission is social and political awareness. It has been a place in which I have learned about issues that directly impact me, my family, and the community at large, and I had no idea. I have strengthened my problem-solving and communication skills. I have gained confidence through leading restorative justice circles.	I gained a lot more political awareness by being on the Commission, especially when it comes to social issues in Oakland. Since Oakland is such a large city, I didn't understand the breadth of issues faced by Oakland youth until I joined the Commission. I got to hear from a lot of different speakers and form personal connections with my fellow commissioners and some members of YVA, which gave me a lot of insight on the importance of youth organizing in addressing the many issues that face us.

Commissioner	Quincy Russell	Bryce Hunter
Role	D3 Commissioner; Secretary	Commissioner At-Large
Committees	Executive, Youth Homelessness, Restorative Justice	Climate Justice
Reflection	The biggest takeaways I gained from the OYC was how to connect with the community, public speaking and learning the process of how programs like CTE-HUB work and how they run events. I think that learning how to connect with the community and public speaking will really help me in the future as it has allowed me to be more confident with my actions and really see the impact of my actions on the people I'm doing it for, like homeless youth. I also learned change doesn't come overnight and that it needs constant thought and focus to make change.	One of the biggest takeaways I have gained from this experience is the importance of building community. From restorative justice training to putting together events to get the community to support a social justice cause, it was really valuable learning how to get people together and create supportive and healing spaces in our community.
What hard skills did you gain?	The biggest hard skills I took away from OYC was learning how to take meeting notes, write advocacy letters and learning how to run a RJ circle. Learning how to take notes and write advocacy letters is very helpful as it will allow me to use them in jobs in the future or to stand up for something I am passionate about. My RJ certification is also very useful as I can use it to resolve problems or rebuild a community.	Some hard skills I have gained are writing advocacy letters and restorative justice training. I would love to pursue restorative justice and lead circles outside of the commission, and I think being able to write formal letters will always be valuable.
What soft skills did you gain?	Some soft skills I have gained from OYC is problem solving and building personal confidence in myself. Public speaking and having overall confidence in myself to make change has been a big growing point for me in the commission. I was fearful to do things like public speaking before but now I have grown way more confident and more willing to do more things around public speaking. Also becoming a better problem solver is also a growth area as I was more prone on giving up on things if they are taking awhile or not working, but now I am more patient and willing to find other ways to fix problems.	I have gained more social and political awareness, communication skills, restorative justice circles, and more engagement in local politics. Again, all of these skills will be incredibly valuable for continuing my participation in social justice.

Commissioner	Airieanna Murrell	Nathan Li
Role	Commissioner for D2; Social Media Officer	Commissioner At-Large: Graphic Design Officer
Committees	Executive, Youth Vote, Climate Justice	Executive, Restorative Justice
Reflection	My biggest takeaway I have from OYC is how to use RJ in certain situations.	One of the biggest takeaways from my time on the Youth Commission was the strong sense of leadership and passion that all of my fellow commissioners had while serving on the commission. I learned from everyone's perspectives as we each had our own stories to share and a strong sense of community within the group as we were all striving to better Oakland as a whole.
What hard skills did you gain?	I now know how to write formal letters.	Being on the commission this past year has allowed me to learn how to hold a restorative justice circle and how to represent the commission on social media through graphic designs. I gained more experience using technology to make graphic designs. After OYC, I will use these skills in outside spaces and in other professional situations where my experience from serving on the commission will help me create a better community within Oakland or elsewhere.
What soft skills did you gain?	I have more social/political awareness.	On the Commission, I learned more about myself and the goals I wanted to set for myself heading into the future. Serving on the Commission this year and working alongside my fellow commissioners helped me realize how much our voices, youth voices, mattered within our community of Oakland. I gained personal confidence in myself as well as communication, problem-solving, and connections which all allowed me the opportunity to be actively engaged in local politics to improve the well-being of Oakland.

Commissioner	Meklit	Mia Hatfield
Role	Commissioner At-Large	Commissioner At-Large; Organizing Officer
Committees	Executive	Executive, Restorative Justice, and Youth Empowerment
Reflection	This experience has definitely given me a lot of knowledge and different perspectives on Oakland and the problems we face.	My biggest takeaway is the amount of hardworking and willing people that want to engage in local issues or politics.
What hard skills did you gain?	N/A	The hard skills I gained are how to letter write and event planning and campaign planning.
What soft skills did you gain?	I've learned how to better communicate with people and keep an open mind.	I have gained a more diverse knowledge of how to engage people in local politics and how to run a RJ circle.