



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Youth Leadership Council Assesses Licking County with Art Show

NEWARK, Ohio, April 7, 2017— The Youth Leadership Council of Licking County has completed a county-wide assessment and will host an Art Gallery Opening to present results.

The Youth Leadership Council of Licking County (YLC) is a youth prevention and leadership development project comprised of high school students who collaboratively work to help make Licking County a happy, healthy, safe and drug free place to live, work and go to school.

Members of the YLC embarked on a seven-month journey of discovery, education and evaluation of their Licking County through a process called Photovoice. Photovoice allows people, usually those with limited power, to use photography to capture aspects of their environments and experiences and share them with others. Pictures, usually accompanied by captions or explanations, bring the reality of the photographer's ideas to the community and spur change. Photovoice is designed to help those with no voice be heard, to reflect on the community's conditions – both positive and negative, to encourage critical consciousness, and provoke change.

"High school students are not typically seen as leaders by adults. This experience allowed us to grow our leadership and it has given Licking County a better understanding of the skill, ability and opportunities young people have to offer," said Vincent O'Neill a senior at Newark Catholic High School and the current YLC President. "We (young people) value and appreciate our community and want it to be the best it can be."

Photovoice, a scientific-based process, began with YLC members canvassing Licking County and taking photographs of people, places and things in their communities which evoked hope or despair. The photographers then had to embark on the first phase of analysis by appraising their photos and explaining the value of the picture and how it demonstrated the appropriate qualities in a video diary. From there, focus groups comprised of high school students, were held across the county to examine and evaluate each photo for content, context and quality. At the end of the focus groups a final review broke down the experience and assessed the photos individually. The whole experience culminated in a gallery show where local leaders, parents and youth got the chance to see the photos and understand the perspective of Licking County's young leaders.

"This process was eye-opening. The students took it very seriously and I know they are encouraged by the community response," said Bobby Persinger, YLC Project Director and Director of the Center for Prevention Services at Pathways of Central Ohio. "The community really came out in support, not only by attending the gallery show but also as collaborators in the planning and implementation.

Youth Leadership Council of Licking County

The Youth Leadership Council of Licking County is a an award-winning youth prevention and leadership development project comprised of high school students who collaboratively work to help make Licking County a happy, healthy, safe and drug free place to live, work and go to school. Through prevention education, civic engagement, leadership development and community service, the YLC strives to educate and inform parents, professionals and their peers on the dangers of substance use, abuse and violence. The YLC is a prevention project of Pathways of Central Ohio with support from Our Futures in Licking County. To learn more, visit www.kidscaretoo.org

Pathways of Central Ohio

Pathways of Central Ohio is a private, non-profit social service agency serving Licking, Knox, Richland, Muskingum, Perry, Morgan Counties. Pathways was established in 1968 and incorporated in 1970. Pathways is the gateway to services which empower the community to achieve success. Pathways is funded in part by Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services, Mental Health & Recovery for Licking and Knox Counties and the United Way of Licking County. For more, visit www.pathwaysofcentralohio.org.



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