

2025 RES-331

RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2026 AS YOUTH LEADERSHIP MONTH

WHEREAS, February recognizes Youth Leadership Month, a time to acknowledge and elevate the voices of today's developing future leaders; and

WHEREAS, youth represent a significant and growing portion of the population and bring unique lived experiences, perspectives, and innovative ideas that are essential to addressing complex community challenges; and

WHEREAS, today's youth are navigating an increasingly complex social, technological, and civic landscape, and are actively working toward a more just and equitable future by advocating for mental health supports, community safety, social and emotional learning, and responsible uses of emerging technologies; and

WHEREAS, findings from the 2021 Dane County Youth Assessment reveal that mental and emotional health challenges disproportionately affect marginalized youth, including girls, LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, and youth experiencing economic stress and highlight the importance of centering youth voices in policy and systems design; and

WHEREAS, youth voices must be heard in policy conversations because, even though youth do not have the right to vote in elections until the age of 18 in the State of Wisconsin, each policy enacted by their representatives will affect them; and

WHEREAS, when youth are empowered to lead throughout their formative years, they develop a strong sense of identity and become engaged civic participants who take pride and ownership in their work and those that they lead; and

WHEREAS, according to Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations, conducted by the University of Wisconsin–Madison, authentic youth participation in decision making improves organizational effectiveness and strengthens governance by increasing innovation, accountability, and responsiveness to community needs; and

WHEREAS, youth–adult partnerships in decision-making settings benefit not only youth but also adults and institutions by enhancing adult understanding of youth perspectives, increasing adult commitment and effectiveness, and improving the overall quality of organizational decisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes the Dane County Youth Governance Program, a program dedicated to developing youth leadership through direct participation in county government. The program provides real-life learning opportunities in local government, brings youth voices to community issues, and fosters confident, capable, and independent leaders for the next generation.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes February 2026 as Youth Leadership Month.

Patrick Miles, Chair

Dane County Board of Supervisors

Signed and sealed before me this
_____ day of _____, 2025.

Scott McDonell,
Dane County Clerk