

YOUTH DESIGN DAY

Mapping Civic Learning Across Pittsburgh



Event Summary

On June 25th, the Civic Learning Ecosystem hosted a Youth Design Day at the SLB Youth Media Center within the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, bringing together youth leaders, educators, civic organizers, and community members from southwestern Pennsylvania. This event was a testament to the power of forging relationships across diverse groups to transform learning systems and experiences. Event attendees focused on the question:

"What would it take to create a map that ensures **every young person in Pittsburgh** can find the opportunities they need to feel powerful and seen?"

Through listening sessions, youth testimonials, and collaborative mapping exercises, we sparked shared curiosity and reimagination. Led by young people, we initiated the creation of a comprehensive map of civic learning opportunities across Pittsburgh.

The Youth Design Day embodied our commitment to hosting convenings that build empathy, trust, and mutual care, helping to foster a learning ecosystem focused on civic readiness and human thriving.

Contact Tess Benoit, tess@thehistorycolab.org, to join this project or other initiatives led by the Civic Learning Ecosystem working group.

Purpose of the Event

- ✳ To showcase youth perspectives on civic learning in the Greater Pittsburgh region
- ✳ To create connections and generate data for a civic pathway and opportunities map

Event Highlights

I) Young People Spoke. We Listened.

This work cannot be done without the people it's looking to serve. Inviting young people into the decision-making process drives innovation and increases the likelihood that outcomes will be embraced.



"We the youth must be a part of and at the **center of problem-solving in our communities** as we are the future and must be part of the conversations about our future."
- Youth Participant

"Involving young people in the creation process **ensures that they feel valued and heard**, which contributes to positive results."
- Youth Participant

II) Mapping | Identifying and Categorizing What Exists

Creating a map of civic learning opportunities isn't just about listing places; it's about making sure those places are meaningful and accessible to young people.

Participants engaged in dynamic mapping to identify and categorize civic learning spaces both in and out of the classroom that are significant for youth engagement.

Central to the discussion was the importance of having youth-led and youth-centered spaces.

Once a robust list of places was created, the participants began to categorize and imagine how these civic opportunities would connect, and map together.

III) Imagining | Designing Solutions

The momentum generated at this event is driving student-created, innovative ideas that will pave the way for a more connected and youth-centered civic learning ecosystem in Pittsburgh. **Next steps include:**

- **Follow-up Design Workshops:** Planning additional workshops to further develop the proposed solutions.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Gathering and analyzing data from the event to inform future activities and program development.
- **Ongoing Collaboration:** Maintaining connections with event participants to sustain momentum and support the implementation of proposed solutions. Recruiting more young people and stakeholders in the design process.



What Young People Are Saying

*"The opportunity to create our own clubs in school gives us a chance to develop leadership skills and **see what kind of leaders we can become.**"*

*"Programs like SLB Radio give us a **platform to express our voices** and showcase our talents, which makes us feel connected to our community."*



*"Working with organizations like the Mayor's Office has been transformational. It's inspiring to see the changes being made and to **be a part of that process.**"*

*"Having the chance to lead projects and make decisions in programs like YES Academy has given me a sense of **agency and confidence.**"*

*"Networking and professional development opportunities, like those provided by the Warhol Museum, help us **engage with our passions and prepare for the future.**"*

By weaving relationships through inclusive conversations and shared discovery, we are fostering a dynamic learning ecosystem that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of young people. Together, we are committed to ensuring that every young person in Pittsburgh can find their path to civic engagement, creativity, and agency.

Stay tuned and please consider joining the [Civic Learning Ecosystem](#) for more updates on this exciting journey!

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Special thanks to the partners who attended and helped lead the Youth Design Day:

Remake Learning, City Charter High School, Committee of 70, LIGHT Education Initiative, Pittsburgh Mayor's Office, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, SLB Radio, World Affairs Council, Youth Enrichment Services, and more.

