

# Youth Pod Alumni Survey

**“THANK YOU FOR THE EXPERIENCE!”**

**We asked hundreds of former Youth Pod members  
and here is what they told us about experiencing youth philanthropy.**

More than 80% of alumni said that they gained important skills such as: decision-making, leadership, nonprofit awareness, awareness of formal philanthropy, grantmaking, and fiscal responsibility.

50% of alumni said that they make an effort to engage others in philanthropic activities.

12% of alumni said they attribute everything they have accomplished to their youth philanthropy experience.

## **IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

“Being a part of KEYS was honestly a turning point in my personal journey.”

“It really helped me develop my leadership skills and appreciation of civic engagement.”

It gave me a word for the thing I wanted to be when I grew up.”

## **WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

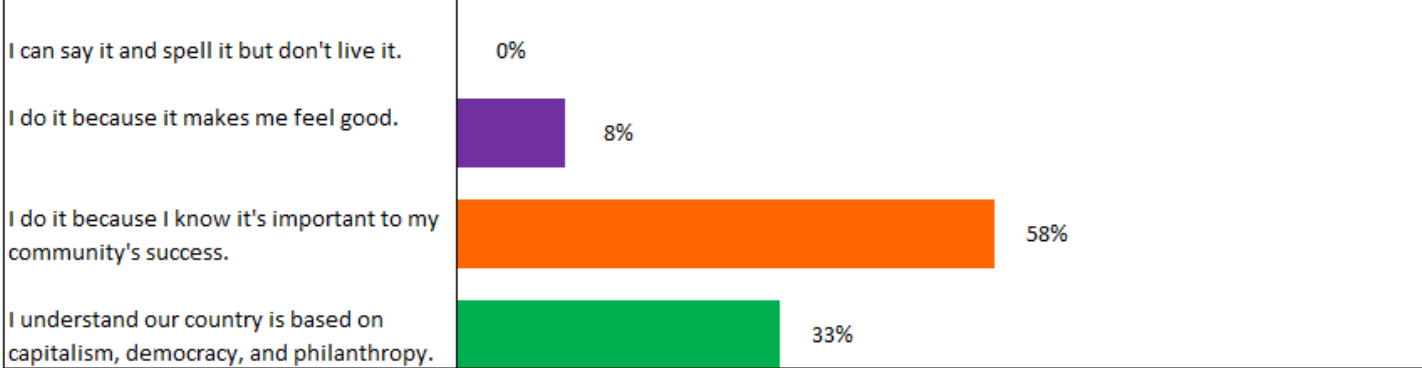
“I would have dreamed bigger for what my group could accomplish and challenged some of the established comfort zones.”

“I guess it would have been nice to have the chance to meet someone directly from the Dekko Foundation. When I was involved, Dekko (to me) was just some far off corporation that gave us money.”

“I honestly do not think my experience could have been any better than it was. It was a life experience that I will always be grateful for. It introduced me to lifelong friends, helped shape me into who I am, and give me skills that I use daily.”

Learn more on the following pages.

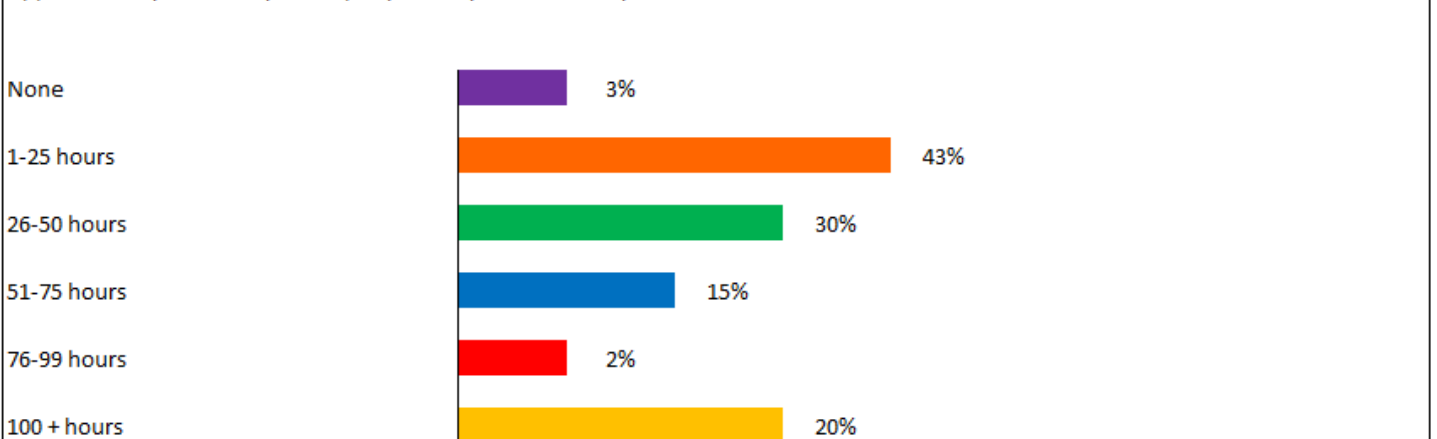
How did your youth philanthropy experience impact your understanding of philanthropy (using your time, talent, and treasure for the good of your community)?



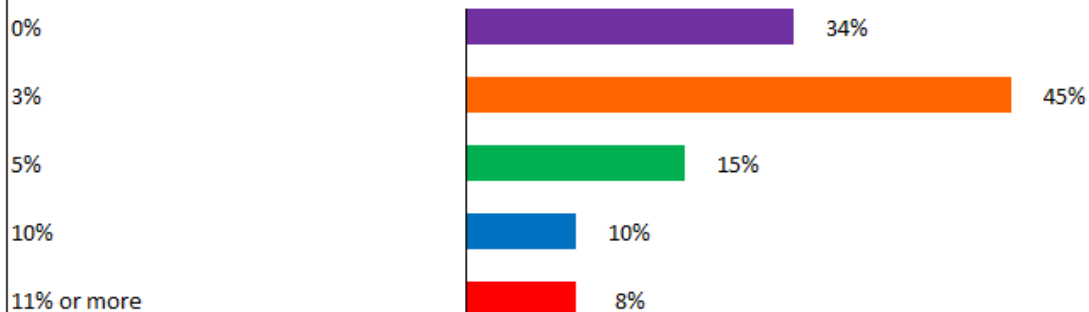
What skills did you gain through your participation in your philanthropic youth group?



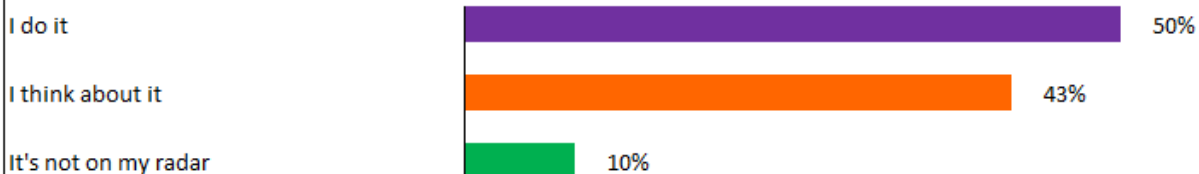
Approximately how many hours per year do you volunteer your time?



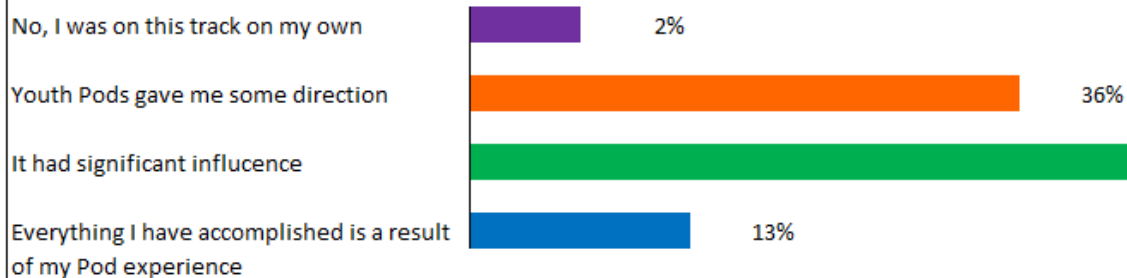
What percentage of your salary do you give philanthropically?



The following describes your level of engaging others in philanthropic activity...



How much did your participation in Youth Pods help shape who you are today?



## What are you doing today?

I am a PhD student at the University of Pennsylvania studying immunology.

Individual Financial Management

I am currently a student at the University of Iowa studying Business Economics and Sport Business. I work for the University Rec Services and enjoy volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and at the local animal shelter.

Career-wise I am a Sales Administrator for Stoops Freightliner. Also involved in Allen County Young Democrats, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana, Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana and uLead Board of Directors

Working as a guidance counselor and math teacher at Mt. Ayr Community High School.

Today, I work for the largest privately owned appliance store in the south. We have three stores in Huntsville, Birmingham, and Montgomery. My official title is Event/Marketing Coordinator, but I do a little bit of everything. From social media, to community outreach to special events, I am the link between the community and company. I host special events monthly at our three stores for women called Girls Night Out. During each of these events I team up with nonprofits and event them to advocate about their worthy cause. In just under one year our company has teamed up with over 20 nonprofits and raised thousands of dollars for nonprofits all over the state of Alabama.

Middle School and High School Social Studies Teacher

I am a design engineer at Magnolia River. I design natural gas pipelines and associated regulator and meter stations.

I am the Operations Coordinator at Indiana Tech. I oversee operations for our Elkhart Area campuses (Elkhart, Mishawaka, Munster, and Warsaw).

Studying at Iowa State University

I am employed by a contractor for Missile Defense and NASA. I am President of the Athens Arts League as well as a volunteer for Spirit of Athens. I am currently completing my master's degree in Leadership Development.

Academic advisor at Columbia College of Nursing

RN at IU Health Arnett

Mechanical Engineer for the U.S. Army

I am currently in my second year of grad school at Georgia State University studying sport administration

I am the general manager for a Gap Outlet in Hilton Head, SC. I graduated from Indiana University in 2008 with a BA in Museum Studies through the Individualized Major Program, and a Minor in Folklore.

I was an 8th grade math teacher for the past 9 years, but now am a stay at home mom to my seven-and-a-half-month old son.

Teaching MS/HS Special Education at Mount Ayr Community Schools!

Currently enrolled in college as medical assistant, getting married this May. To a National guard MP.

Married with one child. Working for Iowa Department of Transportation and own a natural resource management company named Midwest Land Restoration.

Today I caught up on laundry and spent time with family and friends.

Claims adjuster for Progressive insurance

Senior at Huntington University majoring in Chemistry Education with TESOL certificate. I am also Youth Minister at my church.

Director of the Office of Women's Health, Indiana State Department of Health

I attend Purdue University for Chemical Engineering and I have multiple positions in my fraternity, including the Philanthropy Chair. I am also a member of a small club; whose mission is to bring STEM education to nearby schools so kids can better understand what engineers actually do.

Assistant Dean for Civic Engagement at Widener University

Today I am a Community Resources Specialist with the Iowa Arts Council at the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. My work focuses on overseeing grant programs supporting arts and culture in Iowa.

active duty marine

Senior loan counselor for a federal student loan servicer

Interning at Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, IA. I work within equity trade support and help facilitate trading.

After college I moved back to Limestone County and now work at Huntsville Hospital in Huntsville, AL as a Service Excellence Coordinator.

I recently resigned from my job as a librarian at a small historical society museum in Bloomington, Indiana to go to Guatemala to teach English and take Spanish lessons.

Teaching high school science in Eden, OH.

Graduating from Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine in the spring of 2014. With my DVM, I plan to return home and find a practice to work for.

I am currently getting ready to attend Butler University and major in business. I will then continue and earn my graduate degree in Philanthropic Studies at IUPUI. I hope to work in a for-profit business in the corporate community responsibility department.

I am an elementary school teacher. I took a break last year to stay at home with my son but am preparing to begin work next week.

Starting college at Iowa State University!

I am in Nursing school. I just finished my LPN and passed my boards and I am almost finished with the first term of my RN year. I work at the Decatur County hospital as a CNA on weekends.

I will be attending University of Saint Francis this fall to major in elementary education and minor in

I am clerking for Justice Massa on the Indiana Supreme Court.

Student-Athlete at the University of Alabama in Huntsville

Today I am the Communication Director for Parkview Foundation. I also currently serve on the Board of Directors for the McMillen Center for Education.

SHIP Counselor Gallery Host - Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum

Working as Director of Philanthropic and Nonprofit Partnerships at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (and directly overseeing our youth philanthropy initiative - YAPPERS)

Professionally, I am a financial advisor with Edward Jones.

I have a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. I work as a mental health therapist.

Beginning my air force career, after graduating with honors from basic training.

I am an attorney for the Marion County Public Defender Agency.

Stay at home mom in Colorado. Prior to that, worked at United Airlines as the Senior Manager of Continuous Improvement.

I graduated in May from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa and start medical school at the University of Iowa in just a few weeks

Working at the Dekko Foundation and loving it! :)

Preparing for my next step in life, college.

Medical school at Yale

I am finishing up my dual grad degree at IU in Philanthropic Studies and Nonprofit Management. I just took a job with a consulting firm called Thomas P Miller and Associates that helps workforce development, economic development, and education focused nonprofits with strategic planning, resource development, program evaluation and research.

I am a student at IPFW studying human services. I am in a group called Circle K International a community service group at the college.

Currently the Associate Director of Alumni Relations & Development for the Lambda Chi Alpha Educational Foundation. I am in the process of transitioning to a philanthropic role with the Indiana University Foundation.

Working as a program officer at the Dekko Foundation.

Today I attend high school at the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science.

I am a Sr. Engineer for Eaton Corporation within the Aerospace Group, and I'm also currently pursuing an MBA at CU Boulder.

I will be starting medical school at Harvard this year.

Speech Therapist in the Middlebury school district

Attending the University of North Dakota, majoring in Biology. Also working as an RA in the residence halls for the 2013-2014 school year.

Medical Device Distributor - Orthopedics

I am a registered nurse with a BSN and managing the surgical services dept at Parkview Whitley Co Hospital

Teaching preschool at Head Start.

I live in Churubusco with my husband, Jerry, and two kids Olivia and Owen. We have three dogs and two cows. I work as an account manager at One Lucky Guitar, a design and marketing boutique, in downtown Fort Wayne. I am also on the Allen County Fairgrounds Board of Directors and director of the Miss Allen County Queen Scholarship Pageant.

Working as a registered nurse at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN on a hematology unit.

Mayor of Columbia City, Involved in YMCA Board, NE Mayors Roundtable, CCHS Radio Advisory Board, Etc.

I am a nursing major with a Spanish minor at Huntington University.

I graduated Grace College in May (2013) and began working at a treatment center for women with eating disorders in Alabama a week later.

Project Manager Superintendent for E & B Paving

High School Special Education Teacher for Fort Wayne Community Schools

Relaxing

I am currently a sophomore studying Nonprofit Management at Indiana University in Bloomington. This summer, I am finishing up an internship at Noble County Community Foundation.

Will be attending Butler University in the fall to study biology/premed.

I am currently a Junior at the University of Saint Francis studying nursing! I work at Cameron Memorial hospital in Angola! I just got married! In my spare time I coach volleyball and am involved with LaGrange County 4-H.

Mission work on an Indian Reservation in Arizona.

I am going to school at DePaul University in Chicago majoring in accounting.

Getting ready to attend my freshman year at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy to major in Philanthropic Studies.

Board of Directors **College** Counselor  
Degree Design Engineer Family Financial  
Foundation Graduated Group Health  
Indiana Involved Iowa Department **Manager**  
Math Teacher Mission **Nonprofits** Registered Nurse  
**School** start **Studying** Teaching

# Looking back, what one thing would you change about your philanthropic experience in the Dekko Foundation group to make it better?

Not much, I look back on my experiences in KEYS as the most important and fulfilling extracurricular I participated in during that time of my life.

I guess it would have been nice to actually have the chance to meet someone directly from the Dekko Foundation. When I was involved, Dekko (to me) was just some far off corporation that gave us money twice a year...maybe things have changed since then and that is just my opinion.

Include social events for each individual philanthropic group and highlight topics that are important to that demographic (networking, resume building, local political initiatives, etc.)

Engaged community members more in the activities and leadership within the Pod.

I honestly do not think my experience could have been any better than it was. It was a life experience I will always be grateful for. It introduced me to lifelong friends, helped shape me into who I am, and gave me skills that I use daily.

It might be helpful to have a "sending off" for those graduating from high school and the youth pods, giving them ideas of how they can continue involvement in philanthropy throughout college and during their first (likely low-paying, possibly high-hours) jobs.

I would have loved help with searching for colleges my junior/senior years. I wanted to go into Nonprofit Business Management and found a school, but I stopped looking once I found that program. Looking back on it, having someone to help me look at ALL of my options would have been very helpful since the school I chose dropped their Nonprofit Business Management program right before my first semester...

Becoming more of a leader in my youth philanthropy group.

I would have liked to have more time with my group members and have additional volunteer opportunities in the community.

better follow-up on a funded project. I don't remember hearing anything about a project/organization once we approved funds. This would be a good learning experience as to what worked and what didn't.

I was a founding member of TRAIL, so there was a lot of momentum to build before we started making any kind of difference in the community. I wish we could have gotten that momentum earlier and accomplished more.

I enjoyed the grant making process and giving money to deserving people, but the best part of FIST was having Christmas parties with the Vistula Head Start kids and seeing their joy and excitement.

I had a conflict with my classroom needs to give significant time during the day to be a true leader.

More organization

A little more organization and structure

I wish our group could have been more proactive and involved in community projects.

more trust given to the students in the group, less supervision on group meetings and agendas



Get to know those we worked with/helped more.

The connection after you graduate. It's helpful to stay in contact.

More activity with it. I believe we only met once a month, so there were very few meetings and I didn't feel as involved as I wanted to be.

Go see some of the programs we funded in action

I think a little bit more context around formal philanthropy would have been interesting and helped connect some dots. While the idea that young people have the ability to be impact, empowered philanthropists was made very clear and I felt we were given the tools to gain an extensive working knowledge of local nonprofits, learning more about how local foundations operate and strategize may have been interesting. (This is super nitpicky- my experience was wonderful!)

Major in the major things and minor in the minor ones (keep the big picture in mind at all times and not stress over the little things).

I would have liked to have been more involved.

At the time my term ended, I didn't realize how much the foundation did for me and meant to me. I miss being a part of the organization. I would keep closer ties and seek opportunities to stay involved after my term.

Find a way to include more students in the experience.

More involvement with the organizations we were supporting. Giving grant money was great, but it would have been nice to work closer with some of the people we were giving the money to. Such as helping with their events, meeting the people behind the organization, or actually seeing how they money was making a difference.

I wish I would have had more of an opportunity to network with other pods.

Having Dekko come in once a year and take us through a training of some sort.

I thought the foundation was great. I would have me and how I handled the experience of being part of this group. I would have gotten more involved.

I wish that I would have become more involved in PULSE earlier on. When I first began, I was shy and timid. Yes, I was a member and attended the majority of service projects, but I didn't REALLY start participating until a few years after I joined because I was so self-conscious and quiet. I feel like I missed out on the full experience of being part of a youth pod those first few years, but I am extremely grateful because being a part of PULSE forced me out of my shell.

Nothing. I was fortunate to be the first 7th grader chose to participate from my school in Whitley County and my peers and I helped shaped what H.A.N.D.S. would become.



I would have been more active in my younger years

My experience was more than beneficial. Separated 7-years from my FIST experience, there is nothing significant that I would think to change about my youth pod experience. Our adult leaders were empowering and informational and significantly shaped my world view and self-image. I have always had a passion for working with, in and for my community, but my time spent as a FIST member fanned a spark into a flame that continues to burn today. I do wish that there had been more opportunities to

remain connected to the group after graduation so that I would have the opportunity to engage with other youth pod members during their tenure.

It was a terrific experience for both me as a leader and for the students.

I would have let other people in my pod take on more leadership vs. doing many things on my own. I have now learned the art of delegation and wish I'd better understood it then.

It was a great foundational experience regarding the skills listed above. I was a founding member of DeKalb's VOICE.

More outreach go into the community and tell more people about who we are and what we do, Also make it more well known within the school communities. No one knew what it was or why I was leaving school

I would have been more involved

Interacted and networked with the students in the groups outside of mine.

The part of my experience that I think empowered me most and that I would like to see extended to more was meeting periodically with other Youth Pods in the state and through my direct work with Dekko staff. I flew to meet with Dekko staff (I'm happy to see so many names I still recognize online) to plan a website and met people from other groups in a setting where I was free from the cliques of my own group and was able to focus on meeting people and sharing ideas. I hope that others can have similar experiences working with unfamiliar people but finding common ground and working toward a common goal.

Collaborate more between youth pods

I would have joined sooner and increased my involvement in the service aspect of my youth group.

I think more preparation for the grant making decision ahead of time would have freed up more time for activities

I would encourage greater service-learning experiences. We also mostly made grants to the school systems, I would change that by having community foundations encourage their grantees come to speak to youth pods about their work as a nonprofit and even encourage them to apply for funding.

Being more organized. At times I felt that we would get off track, but we could still get things done

I think I would have wanted a curriculum that creates a habit of giving at that age, specifically with treasure. The value of a gift is important, just as important as giving away your time & talent in proactive work in the community. It's hard to ask a 7th grader to give money, but he or she might see the value of the \$2 they gave toward something.

I wish we could've done more outside of meeting times. We only met once a month and think some extra opportunities would've helped to strengthen our group.

I myself wouldn't have been able to change the one negative aspect of my philanthropic experience: more than half of my peers in TRAIL were not as motivated to participate in philanthropy and therefore did not participate as actively.

Group was not agile enough. Power/Control was overly restricted from student control. There was too much group think. Divided group with structured objectives for target grants could have been more beneficial.

I would revamp the selection process. I did not think that a large group interview was an effective way to choose students.

Make the community more aware of the youth philanthropic group

I would change the adult navigators in our group. We experienced dramatic changes in our navigators over the four years I was in POD SQUAD. I would just like to see more committed adults that aren't so single-minded and more willing to work with high schoolers.

Be more active in the community & look for more ways to help. Everything we did was driven by the organizer & we didn't come up with much on our own.

It has been a long time, but I am not sure I would really change much at all. I found it super valuable and I really enjoyed meeting students from other schools as well. I did like the time we met with other youth pods as well. It really helped us gain new ideas.

More community leadership - It was great to decide where dollars should be spent and using our time and talents for non-profits, but we also could have been used more in community leadership activities.

I would have tried to spread the word. I think each Youth Pod has such a big influence in the community, but when you talk to someone about the group, they don't know who or what it is. I think that would be a change that I would personally try to improve on: getting our name out!

I would dream bigger for what my group could accomplish and challenge some of the established comfort-zone.

I don't think I would change anything; I met a lot of people and cherish that still today. I think the most important part is that it continues to help our young generation to understand the acts of kindness and to be involved in the community they live in.

I would have liked to do more community service during meetings.

I would have took on leadership roles earlier in my experience.

I would get involved in PULSE's Exec Committee sooner. I waited until my senior year because I was extremely busy and wasn't comfortable enough with the group, but I missed out on a lot because of that.

Work harder to unite the group more outside of meeting times to understand each other better and work more efficiently.

I loved my experience!!! It was a great learning experience! I wish we could have met more than one time a month. It always felt like we had so much to get through and not enough time!

More clarity of what all the big words meant. Also, more clarity on what was going on during meetings. It is hard to understand as a Junior High/Freshman.

I don't think that I would have changed anything about my youth pod experience; however, I think it would have been great to have more networking/training opportunities.

Activities Big **Community** Dekko

**Experience** Funded **Giving Group**

**Involved** Junior Leadership Little Organization

School Wish Youth Activities Big

**Community** Dekko **Experience**

Funded **Giving Group** Involved Junior

Leadership Little Organization School Wish  
Youth