

Mentored by
community foundations



Supported by schools



Empowered by adult role models



Community-based philanthropic
youth organizations

We call them...



It takes committed partners for Youth Pods to thrive.

1. Youth Pods sink or swim depending on the support they receive from their communities.

When communities embrace the idea of transferring philanthropic decision-making power to young people it creates a world of new experiences. **School leaders** support Youth Pods because they want students to participate in these broadening activities. **Local people who practice philanthropy every day** act as mentors and role models for student members. These adults lead from behind, making sure that the management and energy of Youth Pods is in the hands of the young people.

2. Community foundation leaders provide their unique expertise to Youth Pods.

Charitable giving, grantmaking, fund development and relationship building are just a few of the skills that **community foundation leaders** bring to the table.

3. The Dekko Foundation invests in Youth Pods because, over time, the Pod experience develops philanthropically-minded citizens.

With the support of the partners mentioned above, **the Dekko Foundation** is free to play a big-picture role in Youth Pods. The Foundation strives to set the vision for Pods and what a philanthropic organization for young people should be. Finally, the Foundation plays its grantmaker role by offering much of the financial support needed for Youth Pods to operate.

What *is* the vision for Youth Pods?

Each Youth Pod member will have an opportunity to:

- Increase key leadership skills including: public speaking, decision making and problem solving.
- Build an appreciation for their community and understand their personal power to make a positive impact on their community.
- Develop a strong base in philanthropy and community service that will follow them into adulthood or Have experiences strong in philanthropy and community service..
- Better understand themselves and what they have to offer their community.
- Learn how they can best contribute to the success of their Pod as a whole.

Each Youth Pod group will have an opportunity to:

- Gain experience in how to effectively manage and govern a non-profit organization.
- Demonstrate their value to their community and work alongside adults to address local issues.
- Learn, through real experiences, to be philanthropic with their time, talent and treasure.
- Learn, through real experiences, to work as a team and draw on individuals' talents.

Each community will have the opportunity to:

- Mentor its next generation of philanthropists.
- Nurture young people who are engaged in philanthropy and striving to improve their community.
- Gain insight from the experiences young philanthropists who understand the importance of non-profit work, volunteerism and leadership.
- Benefit from the availability of a sounding board on youth issues.

Adults make it all possible! They lead from behind.

Navigators and Guides (Adult role models):

- Support young people in leadership and philanthropic development.
- Assist young people in developing leadership skills by holding them responsible for leading their Youth Pod.
- Create an environment that allows for critical conversation and safe discussion.
- Help young people to learn from both successful and unsuccessful experiences.
- Serve as adult role models, especially modeling respect for others, commitment, responsibility and philanthropy.

School Leadership:

- Provide human resources, students and staff, to the philanthropic youth organization.
- Offer insight into programs, organizations and the community as it applies to Youth Pods.
- Question members about their experience in learning and applying philanthropic skills.
- Promote the Youth Pod in the school and community!

Community Foundation Staff and Board of Directors:

- Share knowledge of charitable giving with Pod members.
- Offer insights into unique community dynamics; projects, programs, people.
- Develop non-profit leaders.
- Use the group as a sounding board for youth perspective.
- Promote the Youth Pod as a funder of specific charitable causes.
- Promote the Youth Pod as a community resource.

ESP (Consultants in the field of youth philanthropy):

- Equips adults with resources and tools to empower youth.
- Helps Youth Pod Navigators and Guides gain skills in the area of youth empowerment.
- Organizes networking opportunities for the adults who support Pod members.
- Ensures that adults have the overall information and support that they need to support young people in managing their Youth Pod.
- Coach the adults through just about any situation that comes up!

Dekko Foundation Program Officer: Dekko Foundation staff member who:

- Shares and upholds the vision for Youth Pods.
- Acts as a liaison between Pods and the Dekko Foundation.

So many people have asked this, we bet you'll want to know too!

How did Youth Pods get their name? From some pretty funny definitions! The first: **philanthropist** – a person who shares their resources for the better. The second: **philanthropod** – a person who shares someone else's resources for the better.

The people who work through Youth Pods use Mr. Dekko's resources so that makes them philanthropods. Whales swim in Pods. When a mother whale births a calf; she pushes the calf to the water's surface for its first breath of air. We hope that young people are getting a 'breath of philanthropic air' through Youths Pods.

How much funding does a Youth Pod receive? The Pods request funding from the Dekko Foundation each year; traditionally Pods receive \$15,000 for grantmaking and \$2,500 for the administration of their organization. When a plan is in place for members' professional development, up to \$2,000 can be allocated for that development.

Over the years some Pods have requested more or less funding depending on specific projects they are considering and when they've had a solid plan they've been funded. Some Pods have looked outside of their traditional funding source and ask other local foundations or partnered with civic organizations to get a project done. Still others are working to build an endowment for their Pod. Once the endowment is sizable enough the Pod can receive a portion (from interest) to invest in projects.

What role do schools play in Youth Pods? Schools are key Youth Pod stakeholders. As a show of their commitment to Pods, schools allow students to be excused from class for monthly Pod meetings and often provide Pods with transportation and adult role models.

I thought awarding grants and completing service projects were the real purposes of Youth Pod. You haven't even mentioned those things. Over their history Youth Pods have changed a lot! Several years ago, considering grant requests and completing community service projects took most of Pod members' time.

As Pods have evolved, their work has evolved too. Pods still respond to community needs by receiving grant requests from their communities, but they use some of their resources in proactive ways too! Most Pods still get involved in community service projects, but we've noticed that they're more strategic about how they can best use their time, talents and treasure.

What does youth empowerment have to do with teaching young people to be philanthropic? Ideally in a Youth Pod, adults step aside, out of their comfort zone, and let young people take on the responsibility of managing their Pod. This causes a tremendous transfer of responsibility and energy to the young people. When the young people understand that everything depends on their actions, they step up to the plate. They try things, succeed and fail. Over all they develop a realistic understanding of their community and themselves.

What specific skills are Pod members learning and using? Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and public speaking just to name a few. Pod members most often talk about the interpersonal skills they learn as a result of participating in Youth Pods.

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How do we know if our Pod is truly fulfilling the Youth Pod vision? If the young people are studying community needs and using their financial resources in some philanthropic way to address those needs, then you're on your way! If young people are making decisions and leading your Pod's meetings, and you are standing by as a supportive resource, you're two for two!

Do you recommend having siblings in a Pod? That one's up to you. However, what better way is there to educate people in your community about philanthropy than to expose as many different families as possible to Pods?

Is it necessary for Navigators and Guides to dedicate time outside of monthly Pod meetings for networking meetings, Pod trainings, and retreats? Some Pod events and meetings realistically need to be outside of regular meeting times. Over the years these outside meetings have been as infrequent as possible while still providing information and support. If you have an occasional conflict you will want to ask someone else to fill in for you. If you find that you have frequent conflicts with Pod meetings you may want to consider if you have the time and/or commitment to support a Youth Pod at this time.

Does the Dekko Foundation have a preferred way of Pod Member selection? Each Pod has established a different method for selection new Pod Members. A few things that you may wish to think about as you begin this process are: What skills does your Pod need? How does a particular young person's personality fit in with that of other Pod members? What is the prospective member's interest in Pods?

Our Pod is beginning to be more proactive in our grant making, where do we allocate these funds: administrative or grant making? Youth Pod grants contain grantmaking funds and administrative funds.

Administrative: This is what it cost you to do business (paper, copies, postage, marketing, recordkeeping, etc.)

Grantmaking: These funds are set aside to invest in proactive and responsive grantmaking.

When an important question arises regarding Youth Pods, who has final say? We expect that each Pod will empower young people to gain real-world philanthropic experiences. The word **empower** is all-important in this sentence. An adult-led organization that runs seamlessly is not the intent of Youth Pods. A youth-driven, adult-guided, real-world philanthropic experience, with all of the successes and failures inherent in a learning situation **is** the intent.

We have set out to support and empower each Pod to be a self-run organization. However we do reserve the right to ensure that young people are truly guiding each Youth Pod and that their operations are moral and ethical in nature.

Community foundation boards of directors, have financial responsibility for Youth Pod funds. They are required by the IRS to provide legal oversight that ensures all community foundation funds are used in a legal, ethical and philanthropic manner.