

SAMPLE LETTERS

LEAH HAMILTON
1334 W. 65TH PLACE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90045

January 16, 2009

Dear Aunt Jean,

For the last two years I have been participating in the Youth & Government Program with the Downtown YMCA. Our group meets every Wednesday evening during the school year. We have to research and write a piece of legislation which we will take to the Model Legislature in Sacramento in February. Not only does the program make you aware of the problems facing our state, but it teaches you ways of making changes within the system. Most of all, I have met a great bunch of new friends who want to make a difference.

This year, I have volunteered to be a campaigner for the Annual Support Campaign for this program. Over 260 volunteers (mostly adults) are trying to raise \$300,000. The money helps underwrite the program and also provides scholarships for needy delegates.

My personal goal is to raise \$300 and although my fundraising experience consists of selling raffle tickets for the Band Trip to Florida and selling girl scout cookies in fourth grade, I feel confident that I will be successful.

I hope that you and Uncle Tim will consider making a pledge to Youth & Government this year. You can make a one time pledge or pledge an amount to be paid over the next ten months. You can even "charge" it. Please call me at (310) 234-5566 if you can help me reach my goal. I have to have my report in by February 12th so please get back to me right away. If you are going to write a check, you can make it to YMCA Youth and Government and send it to me.

By the way, this year I am going to be a Senator, and I have been chosen to speak for our bill on teacher tenure on the floor of the State Senate. We are the only youth group allowed to use the real chambers in the State Capitol. I can hardly wait.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

**love,
Leah**

SHEILA KATO NOVAK
876 South Bronson Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90005-3605

Dear _____:

Once again, I'm seeking your help for the teens in the YMCA Youth Government program; which is dedicated to the belief "Democracy must be learned by each generation."

Every year, visitors to the program remark that it's the "best-kept secret in America." They're astounded at the almost two thousand well-behaved teens filling the chambers the California Supreme Court, the floors of the California Senate and Assembly, the California Legislature's committee rooms, the Governor's office etc., going about the business of running a model government under minimal adult supervision. Our teens for the most part don't make the newspapers --they are ordinary, law abiding, fun-loving, eager adults-in-training who want to learn about government and aspire to make a better one for their generation.

They spend September to mid-February at weekly meetings of their delegation, learning how laws are made, how they are enforced and how to draft and pass their own legislation on key problems facing society. They attend two weekend training camps at an active army base (the only location that can hold their numbers), learning ethics, parliamentary procedure, the functions of government and, most of all, how to perform real-life roles of senator, assembly person, lobbyist, legislative page, legislative analyst, judge, trial attorney, appellate attorney, television and print news reporters, a member of the executive branch (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Superintendent of Education, etc.).

Their training ends with an intensive five-day conference in Sacramento where they take over the state Capitol and have a lot of fun doing it. It's an unmatched maturation process for teens, often away from home for the first time, and it gives them a chance to form lifelong friendships with a diverse group of peers.

However, the program is very expensive. Even though the program is largely run by hundreds of adult volunteers (most of whom pay their own way to conferences), with only a handful of full-time paid staff, the costs are still formidable. That's where YOU come in. While many economically disadvantaged teens have scholarships available to help defray costs, even middle-class teens have trouble raising the necessary funds. YOUR CONTRIBUTION to this sustaining campaign will help keep the costs of the program down for all participants.

I believe in this program, not only because our daughters Jennifer and Suzanne have, in their time, gotten so much out of it, but because every year I talk to teens from all backgrounds who, without exception, relate stories of what a big difference the program has made in their lives.

Like me, you probably receive many appeals. This is a program, however, where every contribution, whatever its size, truly can and does make a difference.

January 19th, 2009

Dear (name),

“Democracy Must Be Learned By Each Generation,” is the motto of California Youth and Government. **Youth and Government** is a program where over 2,000 students from California discuss political issues important to them. Delegates write new bills, introduce pieces of legislation and have heated debates defending their beliefs. This year I have the privilege of coming back to the program as a college student and being a staff intern. This program is designed so that if students still want to participate in Youth and Government after they graduate, they can come back and teach sophomores about the program. I have had a very rewarding experience teaching a group of twenty sophomores how to write bills and pass them through legislation.

For a second time, I was able to attend the Conference on National Affairs to represent California. This year I had the privilege and honor of leading the delegation. It was without a doubt the highlight of my summer and something that I am surely going to miss now that I am a college student and too old for it. I am also thankful for everything that I have learned in Youth and Government.

This year I have volunteered to be a Team Captain for the Annual Support Campaign for **Youth and Government**. Over 200 volunteers, consisting mostly of adults are trying to raise \$250,000. The money helps to underwrite the program costs and also provides scholarships for needy delegates.

My personal goal is to raise \$2000.00 dollars and I am asking for at least \$50 from you. If you would like to give more it would be greatly appreciated. I am confident that I will reach my goal with your help.

I hope that you will consider making a pledge to **Youth and Government** this year. You can even charge it to your credit card. Please call me at (805) 555-5555 with any further questions. Our deadline is, Friday, February 17th, so please get back to me as soon as possible. If you would prefer to write a check, you can make it out to “**YMCA Youth and Government**” and send it to my address below.

If every student had this opportunity, our state, and country, could be a much better place.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Zoë Carter
California State University Monterey Bay



93955

Please Mail by 2/13/09

February 2, 2009

Dear Ms. Elizabeth Thornton,

You don't know me but my name is Emily and I am a member of the California YMCA's Youth and Government program. I am a senior in High School and have been in the program for three years now and I can honestly say it has been one of the most incredible and rewarding experiences of my life. Over 2200 high school students from across the state participate, coming together for two training conferences and then for a week long conference in Sacramento where we 'take over' the state capitol, assuming the roles and actual chambers of our state legislature. Not only do we learn the inner workings of our government and become aware of the problems facing our state and our country, but we learn how to form our own opinion, debate, and learn from others. This program offers students a way to break out of their shell, to speak their mind, offer their opinion, and not be ridiculed for it. It teaches confidence, honesty, and encourages kids from across the state that they can make a difference.

I am a statewide officer for the program, and this year I have also volunteered to be a campaigner in the Annual Support Campaign. I am assuming you are familiar with the campaign, since I was told you have donated in the past. I understand that donating to a program that you may no longer directly affiliated with may seem unnecessary, but I assure you that your donation is much needed and would be highly appreciated. This year the current financial situation in our country (and particularly California) has proved detrimental to the statewide participation in Youth and Government, so the Sustaining Campaign has taken up the challenge of raising more money than ever before to compensate for our losses. My personal goal is \$500, which will contribute to a grand total of \$300,000 if all goes well. The money we raise goes DIRECTLY to scholarships for needy delegates and to cut costs for inner city YMCA's so that teenagers everywhere can have the same amazing experiences that I have had.

I hope that you will consider making a pledge to Youth & Government this year. You can make a one time pledge or pledge an amount to be paid over the next ten months, which ever is more convenient for you. You can even charge it to a credit card! Checks can be made payable to YMCA Youth and Government and sent in to me in the addressed envelope I have included. I have to report in by February 10 at the latest, so please get back to me as soon as possible.

Youth & Government has a very special place in my heart. I believe that every student deserves a chance to participate, and that you have the opportunity to help make this happen. Consider it an investment in the future, for the students that come out of Y&G truly are the future leaders of California and of America. Thank you for considering this request, every bit helps!

Sincerely,
Emily Michael