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Immediate Release

Kalamazoo Youth Invite House and Senate Candidates to Forum to Talk about Issues that Concern them at Home, in School

KYD Network, YMCA, Michigan's Children Sponsor Civic Event on Monday, Oct. 10

Kalamazoo, Mich. - The stage is set for one of the most distinctive candidate forums in Kalamazoo with youth from the [Kalamazoo Youth Development Network \(KYD Network\)](#) and the [YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo](#) interviewing office-seekers in state Senate and House races about the issues that concern them the most.

School-age youth, as young as 14, will address topics they've selected of personal and community interest - community violence, school violence and mental health - on **Monday, Oct. 10, 2022**, at the **Kalamazoo Promise Building in Room 1209**. The event runs from **4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Organizers have invited candidates in the **40th House District race** (representing southwest Kalamazoo and Portage), the **41st House District race** (located in Kalamazoo), and the **19th state Senate race** (including Kalamazoo County). [Michigan's Children](#) has joined KYD Network and the YMCA in assisting youth with the forum.

Invited candidates are: state Rep. Christine Morse (D) and Kelly Sackett (R) in the 40th House race; state Rep. Julie Rogers (D) and Terry Haines (R) in the 41st House race; and Sen. Sean McCann (D) and Tamara Mitchell (R) in the 19th state Senate race.

KYD Network's Executive Director Meg Blinkiewicz said that community youth relish the opportunity to bring their issues before candidates. They see it as an opportunity to educate candidates, and hold them accountable if elected. "We talk a lot about youth having agency . . . influence over their lives and future. Youth also don't pull any punches and ask pointed questions. What better way to exercise agency than to participate in this democratic process?" Blinkiewicz added.

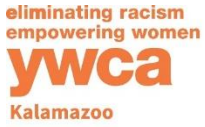
Michigan's Children's President & CEO Matt Gillard said Kalamazoo youth have been important partners in youth-led candidate forums in the past, and is impressed with their level of commitment this year again. "Elections are all about candidates listening to the voices of constituents, and elevating work around solving community problems" Gillard said. "This forum - these youths - aim to do just that."

Members of the press are welcomed to request interviews with organizers in advance of the forum, or on the day of the event.

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Kalamazoo Youth Development Network serves as the intermediary organization for Kalamazoo County's Out of School Time (OST) sector. Our vision is an anti-racist community where all youth thrive.



YWCA Kalamazoo provides direct services to women, children and families. We are on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families and strengthen communities. YWCA of Kalamazoo serves as a primary resource for economic, gender and racial justice for all women, children and families in Kalamazoo.



Michigan's Children is the only statewide, multi-issue advocacy organization focused solely on public policy in the best interest of all children from cradle to career and their families. We have been creating opportunities for young people and caregivers to share their stories, concerns and suggestions directly with policymakers since 1996. As a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, our forums are presented as a non-partisan activity.