



Plano Youth Leadership

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

ALUMNI PROFILE
Jessica Jackson
Class II

Plano Youth Leadership (PYL) is proud of the leadership roles our graduates have taken in the Plano community and beyond. One shining example is Class II graduate Jessica Jackson, who has been putting her leadership skills to good use, as she explained in a recent interview.

What motivated you to apply for the PYL program?

"I was interested in beginning to build my leadership skills. My sophomore year of High School I participated in the P.A.L.S. (Peer Assistance and Leadership) program. I wanted to **expand my leadership skills** and therefore applied and was accepted into PYL Class II."

Did the program meet or exceed your expectations? In what ways?

"The PYL program definitely exceeded my expectations. Many words can be used to describe the experiences I gained from PYL: **mind opening, empowering, engaging, motivating, educational, and inspiring.**"

Describe how you've benefited from your PYL experience and how you've applied the skills you learned in PYL.

"PYL provided an opportunity for me as a young leader to be exposed to philanthropy, education, healthcare, city government, community agencies and organizations, as well as numerous leadership traits including decision making, visioning/goal setting, accountability, and trustworthiness. **PYL helped me to become engaged and connected in my community as a committed citizen.** My leadership experiences have provided me with the knowledge to comfortably facilitate large meetings where information must be disseminated, different points of view heard and an overall consensus reached regarding specific issues."

Where are you now?

"I am the Event Director for the Plano Balloon Festival. In continuing to improve my leadership skills, I have completed and graduated from the Texas Event Leadership Program through Texas A&M, Junior League of Plano's Leadership Development Institute, and participated in the two day Essential Facilitation Training performed by Interaction Associates in conjunction with the Junior League of Plano. **I am also currently going through Leadership Plano Class 24.**"

What are your plans for the future?

"Armed with my leadership training, I would like to **take advantage of the opportunities to serve the needs of our community** by volunteering with non-profit organizations, even perhaps running for public office."

Describe the ways in which you have given back to the Plano community and the PYL program.

"Currently, I volunteer with the Junior League of Plano, an organization of women committed to volunteering in our community and Rotary, an international service organization. I had the pleasure of speaking at the **2005 PYL Graduation Ceremony.**"

Would you recommend PYL to friends/relatives who are still in high school? If so, why?

"Yes, I think it is very important to expose teenagers to leadership skills and all that our community has to offer. Participating in PYL will provide them with a **better knowledge and understanding of the inner workings of our community;** including city government, non-profit agencies, and healthcare services. They will gain the opportunity to build relationships with fellow participants while improving and enhancing their leadership skills."

ABOUT PLANO YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Founded in 1995, Plano Youth Leadership (PYL) is dedicated to training students in leadership techniques and community awareness to prepare them to make a positive impact on the quality of life in the Plano community. Each year, approximately 30 students are selected to participate in the program. These students spend the school year taking part in a curriculum designed to broaden their leadership horizons.

Plano Youth Leadership accepts applications from mid-January through early April of each year for the following year's program. Students who are currently enrolled in the 9th grade and planning to enter the 10th grade during the next school year are eligible to apply if they reside in the area serviced by the Plano Independent School District (PISD), whether attending public school (PISD or non-PISD), private school or home school. An application form is available on the PYL website at www.planoyouthleadership.org

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