

Ridgefield Youth Commission Meeting Minutes

Ridgefield Youth Commission Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2025

7pm

The Barn

10 Governor Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut

Members Present: Denise Qualey, Will Knispel, Akshay Pertab, Kate W, Al Walkin, Krishaa Bhattacharjee, Jim Yavenditti, Edward Martsen, Tom Dardis

1. Welcome and Updates

The meeting opened with introductions and a reminder that Youth Commission meetings are open to all community members. Partner updates were shared from The Barn, the Prevention Council, and Compassionate Ridgefield.

2. Summer Recap & Community Service

The Juvenile Review Board reported a quiet summer and continued focus on restorative approaches for youth. Members discussed community service projects and noted strong participation among local teens.

3. Mental Health & Pride Initiatives

Monthly Lighthouse meetings for LGBTQ+ youth continue in collaboration with Ridgefield Pride and Kids in Crisis. The Kindness Garden was replanted and maintained by the Torch Club. Suicide Prevention Month efforts promoted the 988 mental health hotline and youth outreach.

4. Upcoming Projects & Brainstorming

Members discussed potential topics for winter panels and youth webinars, including:

- Political polarization and respectful civic dialogue
- Digital literacy and misinformation
- Artificial intelligence in education and ethics
- Youth civic engagement and voting awareness

Plans to finalize the winter panel topic and invite speakers will continue at the next meeting.

