

MAYOR DAVE WOOD YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

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THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE



Mayor Dave Wood & Jaimi Wood

The Thanksgiving Food Drive was a cornerstone initiative for the Mishawaka Mayor's Youth Advisory Council this fall, and it proved to be the most successful drive in recent history. Efforts began on October 27, when MYAC officers spoke before the Mishawaka Common Council at City Hall to raise awareness and encourage community support. At the same time, MYAC members led creative fundraising efforts within their schools, Marian High School, Mishawaka High School, and Penn High School, inspiring students and staff to contribute to the cause.

Community outreach expanded beyond schools and City Hall. Three MYAC members, alongside Mayor Dave Wood, were featured on HomeTown Living on WSBT 22, where they spoke with hosts Kim Becker and Melanie Bizoie about the mission and impact of the food drive. Another MYAC student helped spread the message through a radio interview with Sunny 101.5, further amplifying awareness across the region.



On November 17, MYAC members gathered at City Hall to pack 75 Thanksgiving food boxes with care and attention to detail. The following day, 25 boxes were delivered to local veterans, ensuring that they received the support they earned and deserved. On the 18th, 50 additional boxes were distributed to Mishawaka families, allowing the drive to reach even more in need.



This year's drive exceeded expectations, collecting well beyond the original goal and enabling MYAC to help more families than ever before. The success of the Thanksgiving Food Drive was a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when students, city leaders, schools, and community members work together. Through dedication, outreach, and service, MYAC helped make the holiday season brighter for countless families and veterans throughout Mishawaka.

We extend our sincere thanks to the students, families, vendors, and community donors whose generosity and support made this year's Thanksgiving Food Drive a tremendous success.

TOUR OF WASTEWATER PLANT

On October 13, 2025, members of the Mishawaka Mayor's Youth Advisory Council visited the Mishawaka Wastewater Treatment Plant for an educational tour focused on environmental responsibility and city infrastructure. The visit began with an informative slideshow presentation led by several wastewater plant professionals, including plant manager Jill Norton, who explained how wastewater is collected, treated, and safely managed to protect public health and the environment.

Following the presentation, MYAC members toured the facility, walking through different stages of the treatment process. Students learned how wastewater from homes and businesses is fully treated before being released back into the St. Joseph River, ensuring the waterway remains safe and clean for the community and local ecosystem. The hands-on experience helped students better understand where their waste goes and the critical role the plant plays in daily city operations.



After the tour, the council held its regular meeting on-site, where members discussed upcoming initiatives, including plans for the Thanksgiving Food Drive. The visit left many students with a greater appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that keeps Mishawaka running smoothly and reinforced the importance of environmental stewardship and civic engagement.

TOUR OF JAMIL PACKAGING



On December 8, 2025, members of the Mishawaka Mayor's Youth Advisory Council toured Jamil Packaging in Mishawaka, gaining an in-depth look at one of the city's largest and most impactful businesses. The visit began with a presentation from high-level Jamil Packaging leaders, including Chief Executive Dave Diroll, who explained the wide range of packaging the company produces, challenges in manufacturing, and business operations behind the scenes.

During the presentation, students viewed examples of Jamil's work, including custom-designed boxes for well-known brands, and learned what sets Jamil apart in the packaging industry. A major highlight was learning about the company's "CORR" Values: Do the Right Thing, Team Before Self, Embrace Accountability, Be a Loyal Teammate, and Stay Humble & Positive. These principles guide daily operations and company culture.

Following the presentation, MYAC members toured the warehouse floor, where they were impressed by the sheer scale of production. Students observed massive, highly efficient machines operating with precision and intensity, gaining a new appreciation for the labor and coordination required to run such a facility. After the tour, the council held its regular meeting, discussing upcoming initiatives, including Youth Legislative Day. Many members left inspired by the innovation, values, and economic impact of a major business operating within the city of Mishawaka.

WINTERFEST VOLUNTEER EVENT



On December 4, 2025, members of the Mishawaka Mayor's Youth Advisory Council volunteered at Mishawaka's annual Winterfest, helping bring holiday spirit to downtown and supporting one of the city's most beloved community traditions. Set around Ironworks Avenue and the Ironworks Ice Rink, Winterfest is a free, family-friendly celebration that marks the start of the holiday season with a lighted parade, tree lighting, ice skating, Santa visits, and a wide variety of entertainment.

During the event, MYAC members assisted with parade operations by holding lights and barriers along the route to help guide floats and ensure public safety. Students also interacted with local families, spreading Christmas cheer while enjoying hot chocolate and the festive atmosphere. Reflecting on the experience, one student shared, "It was really special to be part of something that so many families look forward to every year. Helping take pictures with Santa, talking with families, and seeing how excited kids were made all the work feel meaningful. The hands-on involvement gave students a unique perspective on how large community events are organized and how volunteers help make them successful.

Winterfest continues to be a powerful example of community togetherness, featuring attractions such as free ice skating, a winter market, food trucks, fire performers, ice carving, music, meet & greet with Santa and other family activities. Through their service, MYAC members played an important role in creating a safe, joyful, and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. The experience reinforced the council's mission of civic engagement and left students inspired by the impact of giving back during the holiday season.

Stay connected with us by visiting our webpage at <https://mishawaka.in.gov/myac/> and following us on social media.



Thank you to Marian, Mishawaka and Penn for their ongoing support.