Engaging Gen Z in Service and Social Justice

OACC Fall 2022 Student Success Leadership Institute
Today we will discuss

What and who is Gen Z
Strengths and values of Gen Z
Gen Z and social justice
How we attract Gen Z to our programs

“In this workshop we will discuss how we can use Gen Z’s strengths to volunteer, share our missions, and make an impact in our communities.”
How to speak "GINZ"
Gen Z values True or False

Gen Z all think the same.
- **FALSE.**

Gen Z is sad and angry all the time.
- **TRUE.**

Gen Z has the shortest attention span.
- **TRUE.**

Gen Z is the healthiest generation.
- **FALSE AND TRUE.**

Gen Z only care about TikTok and Instagram.
- **FALSE.**

Gen Z is tech dependent.
- **FALSE.**

Gen Z has strong beliefs.
- **TRUE.**

Gen Z is the funniest generation but has a weird sense of humor.
- **TRUE.**
Gen Z values True or False

- Gen Z all think the same. **FALSE.**
- Gen Z is tech dependant. **FALSE**
- Gen Z is sad and angry all the time. **TRUE.**
- Gen Z has the shortest attention span. **TRUE**
- Gen Z is the healthiest generation. **FALSE AND TRUE.**
- Gen Z only care about Tik Tok and Instagram. **FALSE.**
- Gen Z has strong beliefs. **TRUE**
- Gen Z is the funniest generation but has a weird sense of humor. **TRUE.**
Gen Z and giving back

In a Points of Light 2021 survey, half of all Gen Z respondents said they will do more to get involved after the pandemic than they did before.
1. Help them feel more fulfilled by directly connecting them to ways to help others. It’s not an understatement that the isolation and loneliness brought on by the COVID-19 shutdowns have substantially impacted the mental health of young people. Research has shown that volunteering positively impacts social and emotional health and gives young people a sense of belonging. You can direct older youth to in-person opportunities through our platform Engage or instructions on how to build their own activity through our Virtual Volunteering toolkit.

1. Understand that the issues that may be of most concern to young people may not be your top issues. Recognize the areas that young people are most concerned about and help them address those issues in ways that resonate with them. It’s important to remember that their world view may be different and supporting their vision for the future will help them actualize it. One activity you can do to get everyone on the same page is our Courageous Conversations.

1. Empower them by looking to them as true leaders and experts. Allowing youth to truly lead the change they want to see can have greater impacts than adults alone can produce. Frances Leung and Nicole Kim, who are bringing Gen Z BIPOC youth together to make youth activism communal and accessible through their work with the Nonstandard Project, are examples of young people leading work and having a real impact.
Defining moments
How history is shaping Gen Z’s attitudes towards social justice

2016, 2020 Elections

The rise & fall of Social Media

LGBTQ+, BLM protests

COVID 19

Mass Shootings
Case Study
A community service office with a goal of engaging students in volunteer opportunities and teaching social justice topics, plans to build a cohort program in Fall 2023

Advertising:
Use more visual learning and videos, social media instead of physical posters.

Events:
Less big events and more passive events to meet students where they are at, online and virtual opportunities.

Activities:
More emphasis on service programs that tackle causes of local community issues students can connect with. They also want to be excited and laugh so add humor.

Programming:
Topics discussed in programs should shift from surface level overviews to deeper discussions, and of course incentivise!

Inclusion:
Have time to build community, use inclusive language and make everything accessible.

Outcomes:
Students should be able to connect their experience in the program to careers and professional development, they want to see their values in the work.
Case Study

Student A

Sees an Instagram Reel video made by the Community Service Office that was funny and advertising the different opportunities to volunteer in the community. Student A visits the office looking to chat with someone about these opportunities and she learns how to view volunteer opportunities on the online platform. Student A does not have experience volunteering, but when she was young she attended programs at her local Boys and Girls club. Student A also mentions that she is in school for physical therapy and wants to work with kids, especially lower income children. The student worker suggests Student A volunteers with a local organization that helps kids with disabilities play sports, they need assistance on Saturdays and when Student A is not in class. The student worker also suggests that Student A attends a workshop coming up that will address how community programs can support lower income community members - the workshop is both in-person with free food but also available for virtual learners which fits Student A's schedule better. A staff member mentions that this volunteer opportunity would be a great opportunity to gain experience in this field but also make friends with other students that volunteer.
Takeaways

1. Deeper meaning to work, connect back to justice
2. What is the point, connect back to career
3. Personalized experience with a menu of opportunities to choose from
4. Ability to have freedom to express themselves
5. Appreciation and kindness, focus on mental health
6. Inclusion and accessibility with accountability
7. Technology and visuals (social media)

How do you plan to adapt your programs to engage generation Z?