

YMCA Youth & Government

How did the YMCA Youth & Government program impact your life?

Coming from a rural community where most people never moved away, participating in the program provided me with an opportunity meet other people from across the State and broadened my horizons putting me on a pathway to be part of the bigger world. I made several friends some of whom I see periodically and others on a daily basis. I also learned that relationships transcend ideology.



Jeff Woodburn
NH State Senator for District #1

What years did you attend Y&G: 1982-84

What High School did you attend:
White Mountain Regional High School

Did you hold an office?

I ran for Y & G Governor in 1984 but lost to Christopher Boothby, from Peterborough. We were both interns for Executive Counselor Ray Burton. I learned the value of a good slogan ...Chris's slogan was, "When you enter the both vote for Boothby." Chris and I developed life-long friendship

Favorite memory from the program?

In our school we had to do a drawing because there were more students interested in Y & G than slots available. I didn't pull a winning ticket in the drawing but another student, who knew I was very interested in politics, gave me his ticket. Being in the State House was very special. We felt that there was something spiritual about the building. We felt that we had been given a trust to use the building and take our roles seriously.

Why do you think the Y&G program is still relevant today?

At the time the Y & G program enhanced my confidence and helped propel my career in politics. Running for Governor was a great process. I worked closely with my teacher Michael Petrocenni. It was very elaborate creating and implementing an agenda. I was very proud of what I had accomplished. That in turn bolstered my self-confidence and took what was an interest in politics and cemented that interest.

Are there any values you learned still with you or guide you today?

As a former Civics Teacher I think the program is as important and valuable as ever. It is a "full body" experience that helps teach students how to have a dialogue. It shows kids how the process works; how you can make a strong case for your point of view; and it teaches kids disagreements can be settled without fists flying. It provides kids with opportunities to learn that while you may not win the argument today, there will be another opportunity tomorrow and to keep at it. It helps to reinforce the belief that progress is going to happen eventually and relationships are forever.