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Students sharing their voices through 'All in with Athens' Youth Commission podcast

Students in Athens are sharing their voices on issues ranging from economic development to community involvement through their own podcast.

The Athens Mayor's Youth Commission, comprised of 10-12 graders from Athens High School, Athens Bible School and Lindsay Lane Christian Academy, teaches students about local government's role and their role to be engaged and informed citizens.

This year, commission mentor Holly Hollman challenged the students to create their own podcast. The students developed "All in with Athens." Each month, two students choose a topic and share their ideas. Mentor Jerome Malone facilitates the discussion and oversees recording and editing.

Hollman said the Athens-Limestone Public Library helped make this project possible by providing instruction on the use of its recording room, providing recording time and offering the platform for hosting the podcast.

Library Director Jennifer Baxter oversaw the first podcast in October with Youth Commissioners Christina Jones and Claire Lawrence. Baxter asked questions about the purpose of Youth Commission and why they wanted to participate in the program.

"We come together as kids who want to make a difference in the City of Athens, and have their voices heard," Jones said.

Lawrence added, "We use the term kids, but in a few years, we'll be adults, we'll be voting, and we'll be making decisions. What better time than now to get involved with your community, help out and do what you can?"

In November, Youth Commissioners Katrina Wiggins and Marilyn Swint discussed community service. They included discussion on how community service that assists those in need should embrace ways to help without embarrassing those who receive the help.

The December podcast featured Youth Commissioners Avery Paysinger and Taylor Fisher and focused on economic development and growing Athens while maintaining its charm.

"We started this program initially so students could see that your best opportunity for change is at the local level where you worship, dine, shop and meet with local decision makers and community groups," Mayor Ronnie Marks said. "Our next goal was to provide them with an outlet to share their concerns and ideas. A podcast is a fantastic way to show we truly want to hear what they have to say."

You can listen to episodes of "All in with Athens" and library podcasts such as "Between the Stacks" on Spotify, Apple, Podcast Addict, Player FM and Google Podcasts.