

100 BEST COMMUNITIES

Washington

Bellevue, WA

Bellevue is one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People, in part, because the city's education efforts continue to improve. In the most recent index of the nation's top-ranked 1,000 schools, *Newsweek* once again included all five of Bellevue's high schools. Of recent Bellevue graduates who participated in a survey, 87% indicated they had a high-quality academic experience in high school. 89% felt that teachers cared about them, and 84% felt well prepared for life after high school.

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City of Lakewood, WA

Lakewood is one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People, in part, because several schools serving high percentages of low-income students have made double-digit gains in test scores over the past four years. Five small learning communities were created with support from the Gates Foundation to provide a more personalized high school education. The results are dramatic. The district's graduation rate increased from 56.1% to 66.9% from 2004 to 2005.

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Lower Yakima Valley, WA

The Lower Yakima Valley is one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People, in part, because of its MVPC (Mid Valley Provider's Consortium), an extensive network of organizations, school districts, and individuals that have come together to jointly solve problems and help youth and families be successful. The Consortium has brought hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of funding for youth services into the Lower Valley for programs such as 21st Century Learning Centers, providing safe, supervised, and educational activities after school.

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Redmond, WA

Redmond is one of the *100 Best Communities for Young People*, in part, because of its Neighborhood Schoolhouse program that creates a safe and supportive after-school program for elementary students working with adults and older students. It utilizes school buildings after hours for kids and families as a place of fun and learning. With tutoring programs and activities like science, tennis and chess, kids don't have to go home to empty houses and are able to get continued support after school hours.

For additional information, please contact:

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Spokane County, WA

Spokane County is one of the *100 Best Communities for Young People*, in part, because of the work of the Spokane Regional Youth Department. The department raises money from private and civic organizations in support of the Chase Youth Enrichment Fund, which allows kids from low-income families to participate in constructive activities through purchase of sports equipment, registration fees, uniforms, and other items. Spokane Neighborhood Action Program, a low-income family assistance program, partners with Chase to distribute the funds.

For additional information, please contact:

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