



At Youth Go we serve dinner Monday through Friday for our youth in the evening and we also provide a daily snack right after school. In any given week we are serving dinner to 15-30 youth each night. Currently our kitchen set-up is not conducive to the frequency for which we use it and we are limited to the kind of cooking based life skill programming we can offer to our youth. The purpose of this kitchen remodel is to increase efficiency, offer more programming to our youth, and to provide our agency with a new space to create. We want to provide additional work space, to increase the number of appliances, and to be able to not only prepare our meals more efficiently but also provide more cooking and nutrition program opportunities to our youth.

Whenever people come to tour Youth Go, I always bring them in the kitchen space to explain how important that space is. First and foremost, it allows us to provide at-risk and underserved youth with a basic need. Our kids come to Youth Go hungry after school and the daily snack we serve is so important. Also, the teens that are with us in the evening are served a meal each night. Many of them have stated in the past that if it wasn't for Youth Go they would go without dinner or have to find a way to provide for themselves. In addition to feeding them we are also teaching them how to follow recipes and cook and bake through our Cooking Club. The thing that people often don't realize is the number of conversations that take place in the kitchen. When I think about being a youth, I think about the number of talks I had in the kitchen with my mom or my grandmother about what was going on in my life, what I was struggling with, or what successes I was having. As staff, we are having those conversations with our youth in that space. Our hopes for the new kitchen is that it will be an inviting and comforting space that allows for meaningful conversations to be had and a well-designed and updated space for delicious meals to be prepared and important life skills to be taught.

Youth Go is a no-cost drop in center located on the border of Neenah and Menasha that provides youth in grades 5-12 with a safe and supportive place to spend their time after school and in the evenings. We provide the at-risk and underserved youth in this community with a place where they can belong. We offer those youth who may normally be overlooked or who might "fall through the cracks" with a second home. Youth Go celebrates the value of all youth and sees potential in each child that we come in contact with. Through our Recreation, Education, and Support and Wellness Programs we strive to provide them with the support, encouragement, and guidance that they may not be receiving from other aspects of their lives. We do our best to provide a wide variety in programming so that any youth who walks through our door will be engaged by an activity, club or program. Whether it is helping a teen with their homework, providing a young person with a meal, or offering a listening ear to a youth struggling with a personal problem, the staff members at Youth Go do all they can to make a difference each and every day.