



**Mikva
Challenge**

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Madison students stand up and speak out on their soapboxes

Madison, Wis. (April 21, 2025) — Over a hundred area students will come together to prove that they are neither apathetic nor unengaged in the political process at the Madison Project Soapbox Youth Speech Showcase.

The Project Soapbox Youth Speech Showcase will be held at Overture Center for the Arts on **Monday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.** The youth-driven civic engagement event calls on area youth to speak out on issues that affect them and their communities. The event is part of the national Project Soapbox program, now in its 18th year, which provides students in cities across the country with a platform to speak out about the issues impacting them. The Madison Project Soapbox Youth Speech Showcase will include students from 16 middle and high schools in Madison. It is a celebration of our dynamic next generation of engaged and active citizens.

To be selected for this event, each of these students, grades six through 12, delivered their speeches first to their peers and teachers in schools across the city. Students answer the question: “What is the most pressing issue facing young people today, why is it important and what should be done to address it?” Students’ chosen topics run the gamut – from mental health to education to the environment and everything in between – but all speeches include powerful combinations of passion, research and personal stories about themselves and their loved ones.

The Project Soapbox Youth Showcase is a unique opportunity for students to experience speaking to a large audience and to have their voices heard beyond their classrooms. During the event, students will share their call-to-action speeches with peers and community leaders, who will help them consider how they can make their ideas a reality. Select students from each citywide Soapbox event, including Madison, will be invited to participate in Soapbox Nation, Mikva Challenge’s national culminating event showcasing Project Soapbox speakers from across the country. Soapbox speeches have had lasting, transformative impacts on classrooms, schools and communities in Madison and across the nation.

Press photo and video opportunities: Wednesday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. at Overture Center for the Arts (201 State St, Madison, WI 53703). Students will deliver speeches on the main stage of the auditorium in front of their peers, school and community leaders and other advocates.

After participating in Project Soapbox,

- 94% of students believe they can make a difference in their community
- 98% of students increased their civic knowledge
- 96% of participating teachers have more positive relationships with their students
- 100% of community leaders are more likely to involve youth in decision-making after serving as a guest judge for Project Soapbox

About Mikva Challenge: Mikva Challenge is a nonpartisan organization that develops youth to be empowered, informed and active citizens who will promote a just and equitable society. We do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise. Learn more at mikvachallenge.org.

Celebrating 20 years in Madison, Wis., OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization that features seven state-of-the-art performance spaces and five galleries where national and international touring artists, nine resident companies and hundreds of local artists engage people in nearly 500,000 educational and artistic experiences each year. Overture's mission is to support and elevate our community's creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts. overture.org

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