

Youth Awareness Chairman Training

May - August: Prepare for your fall Youth Awareness Program

The Lodge and Chapter officers should have a meeting and decide how many students they can afford to sponsor; and if they want to sponsor together or separately. If it is financially feasible, try and recruit more students than you anticipate will complete the program. The cost for training is \$25.00 per student; if you train three and only one finishes the program then you have lost \$50.00 on the training, but you still have a student in the competition. If you only train one student and he/she does not complete the program, then you have only lost \$25.00 but you are also out of the program and competition for that year.

Choose a coordinator/chairman that will be committed to the students and their success. The students should always come first with this chairman; and all other lodge/chapter functions and obligations should be secondary. A good YA chairman will miss many meetings during the 5 or 6 months they are working with the students. The chairman must be accessible to the students 24-7 from October thru February; and be willing to move quickly when a student needs their help. It is sometimes difficult to have separate chairmen from the lodge and chapter. If at all possible, try and choose one person that will represent both, be able to communicate with both, and have no bias between the two. If you must have two active chairmen; they should be able to work together and not view this program as a competition between the two. To be successful, the YA program should always be mutually administered and mutually funded.

The coordinator/chairman should be included in a meeting, with the lodge and chapter board of officers, to lay the groundwork for communication; decide on a budget that will include training cost, supplies cost (there should be a cap per student), rewards for the student(s) that complete the program, and the potential cost should the student(s) be selected in the top three of the VMA competition. It should also be decided at this time how the cost will be covered by the lodge and chapter (each should commit in writing exactly what expenses they are willing to cover and submit to the membership for approval). Once approved, these commitments become **promises** to the students and will be used by the chairman to help with the student recruiting process. All promises must be met when working with a school and their students. If the student(s) completes their promise to the program, then the promises made to the student(s) had best be available at the end. The chairman must assume all responsibility for coordinating these promises between the student(s) and lodge/chapter and assure that all flow smoothly. A disappointed school and student in a YA program is nearly impossible to recover from. However, a satisfied school and student will ensure a successful YA program for many years.

The student rewards are very important and should be considered carefully. There are two very specific reasons the students sign up for this program; the first being **money-money- and more money**, second is the opportunity for community service (this one is very important on their college app's.) If you want a successful program, want your students to perform well - you must have a sizeable carrot to dangle before them whenever they get lazy or have too many other things to do. The rewards that will be presented in March must equal the amount of work that they have put into their program October thru February.

Keep your membership informed about the work being done with the YA students. You never know where a valuable resource for this program is unless you advertise that it is ongoing. The students are going to need places to present their "kids talks" - elementary schools, day cares, church youth groups, scout troops. Many of your members have access to these children's groups and will offer to help if they know what is needed. Your students are going to need supplies and small gifts for the children. This is another area where you can solicit the membership for help. Your members may own businesses, or work for companies that look for community service groups to donate to. Promotional items from these companies can help fill the "goody bags", and the business owners see it as good advertising. Just like everything else in the Moose, anything you can get donated will save the lodge and chapter the expense of buying it.

September - October: Recruiting the students

Students for the YA program can come from various sources; the local high school, church youth groups, and even your neighbors. If you decide to solicit the local high school you must be prepared to present your offer with knowledge and accurate information about the program. Contact the school and ask for the name and contact info for a counselor that may be able to help - this can be someone on the guidance staff, a student career counselor, or one of the special activities counselors, like SODA or Teacher Cadet instructors. Once you have the name of your contact, you have the option of calling for an appointment,

emailing, or snail-mailing the person. Put your teacher packet together that should include the current Moose International Youth Awareness Program brochure and specific information on what your lodge/chapter have committed to provide for the students. **You are not** asking the school and students to do something for you; rather **you are** offering a unique opportunity for them to participate in a program designed for community service and children. **You are not** asking the students to represent your lodge/chapter in this program; rather **you are** offering to sponsor them in presenting themselves for service to children. Be very specific with the school representative as to how many students you are willing to sponsor, and everything your sponsorship

will include. Spell it out for them so that there is no misunderstanding about your intentions. Be assured, the school's role is as guardian for their students, and they will be reluctant to release any personal information concerning their students. All you can ask them to do is to make available the participation registration form and brochure's to student's that they think would be interested in the YA program. Be sure and indicate on the registration form which of the student training congresses you plan to attend with them; during this early part of the school year dates and times are very important to the students as they already have a lot on their plates. Ask the counselor to collect the signed registration forms and let you know when it is ok to go back to the school and pick them up. Once you have the signed registration forms, call the homes - do not ask to speak to the student first - always talk to the parent that has signed the consent form first. Introduce yourself to the parent/guardian and ask if they have any questions about the program, the Moose Lodge, or you. Once you feel comfortable that the parent understands the program and what will be expected, go ahead and talk to the student. It is really helpful, if you do not know the student, to set up a meeting @ the lodge with you, the parent(s) and student(s). This will give you an opportunity to actually see your student(s),

get a feel for their sincerity and find out what topics they may be interested in for their "kids talks". You can also take this time to

make the parents feel comfortable about their students being involved with the Moose. It is not recommended that you speak to these parents about membership in the Moose - this program is not designed to increase your lodge/chapter membership - stick with the business at hand - Youth Awareness and Community Service. Be honest with them, let them know that your lodge/chapter participate in this program as part of Moose International and the state's requirements for community service.

October - November: Student Congress

The student training sessions are held throughout the state during October and November. Whenever possible, choose a training session closest to your lodge and school district so that there is not a transportation issue with the student(s). The chairman/coordinator should always attend the training session with the student(s) and participate in the training activities. The knowledge you get from your participation will be very important in the coming months when the students will need assistance.

November - February: "Kids Talks" and Reports

The chairman/coordinator and the students are now ready to put all that they have learned into action. Hopefully your student

has already chosen a topic and is ready to begin their research and put their program together for presentation to the children

Never, ever assume that because they are students that they will automatically know how to do this project. What has been learned in the training will be mostly about Youth Awareness; and if they are lucky, a little about speaking to children. They will not have learned step by step what they need to do. Never expect a student to do something you wouldn't do, or in the best case scenario haven't done yourself. Try this exercise during the summer months when YA is not active: Choose a topic; gather

your research materials; put together a lesson plan, hand-outs, and activities; and complete a report. See how long and agonizing

a process this actually is. If you can do this, then you are ready to counsel your student(s). If you can't, then at least you will

know what a difficult task you have given them. Remember; if you can't do it, chances are they can't do it. Stay with your student(s); help they research; help them gather materials; help them with their lesson plans; help them with their supplies; help them get locations for their talks; HELP THEM, HELP THEM, HELP THEM!! If you are fortunate enough to have a sophomore or junior, and you go through this first experience with them, they will come back for another year; and they will recommend your program to their friends and siblings. Left to their own devices, they probably will not complete the first year.