



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Purpose and Goals

The Colorado Youth Leadership Forum (CO-YLF) is an innovative, 5-day on campus conference, for Colorado high school juniors, seniors, and young adults under 26 with disabilities, as they prepare for and experience transition to adulthood.

Students serve as delegates from their communities and are given the opportunity to cultivate their potential leadership, citizenship and social skills. Designed to foster personal growth through self-discovery, the CO-YLF provides dynamic, experiential learning opportunities to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths while planning for their future.

Successful men and women with disabilities serve as role models in helping youth realize their ability, right, and obligation to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to society.

Based on a national youth forum model, first developed in California in 1992, the Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) decided to do more to inspire and prepare Colorado youth with significant disabilities to confront the barriers to employment and social participation they face as they become adults.

Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of CO-YLF is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter. It is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to develop and change.

Most importantly, we envision creating a forum that embraces the philosophy of independent living and teaches the delegates to understand and not be ashamed of their experiences as people with significant disabilities.

We want to create an annual, statewide training that provides powerful formative experiences to accelerate their learning. This in turn aims to:

- Make the young people aware that they have both a right and a civic responsibility to secure the highest form of employment or post-secondary education for which they are qualified.
- Encourage youth not to put unnecessary limits on their academic and career goals by exposing them to successful role models--adults with disabilities who have a variety of achievements.
- Give the student delegates skills and the knowledge of technology and other resources that can help them develop and achieve those goals.



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- Motivate the delegates to become active in their communities and to realize their leadership potential, especially by serving as role models for other young people with disabilities and as advocates for the education, training, and employment of all people with disabilities.
- Teach the delegates about the history of their IL predecessors with disabilities, including the long struggle for civil rights, resulting in such legislation as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provide an opportunity for young people with disabilities to participate in an intensive forum that emphasizes leadership, independence, and personal and career goal setting.

The CO-YLF curriculum will provide eight (8) primary training components:

1. Principles of Leadership
2. Experience of Disability
3. IL Technology and Resources
4. Living on My Own
5. Reaching My Education and Career Goals
6. Leading in My Community
7. Personal Development Planning
8. Preparation for Follow-up Mentoring

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (CO-YLF)?

CO-YLF is an innovative, 5-day conference, designed to foster leadership skills and personal growth for students and young adults who have disabilities, as they prepare for and transition to adulthood. CO-YLF believes leadership is a personal journey, and begins with maximizing leadership roles and responsibilities. CO-YLF provides experiential learning opportunities to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths and gifts, in conjunction with planning for their future.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN CO-YLF?

Youth who have disabilities, referred to as Delegates, who demonstrate leadership potential, an interest in embracing and enhancing their lives, and who wish to interact effectively with other youth and adults are a great fit for CO-YLF.

Accommodations are available to maximize access for all. It is essential to the dynamic process of CO-YLF that there is diversity in all aspects. Everyone has something to offer, and CO-YLF encourages youth to identify and take pride in who they are as a person, and how they choose to establish themselves in the world.

Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council

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CO-YLF is intended to serve youth who have a variety of disabilities and diversities. Therefore, Colorado youth who will have completed at least two years of high school by June, those who have recently graduated, or those who are young adults in transition, are encouraged to apply and will receive selection consideration. The YLF accepts students with varying social-economic backgrounds and ethnicity from around the state.

WHAT HAPPENS AT CO-YLF?

CO-YLF brings together up to 25 youth who have disabilities from across Colorado, for a 5-day experience that focuses on self-discovery, leadership development, career exploration, effective personal and systems advocacy, and empowers through heightened awareness of disability history and culture. Through Person Centered Planning, Delegates are assisted in developing a Personal Leadership Plan, which includes specific action items, as they return to their home communities. Delegates become a voice for their peers as they serve to inform the Colorado State Plan for Independent Living. Delegates are assigned a mentor for on-going support for one year after CO-YLF, and are offered continued connection through joining the CO-YLF Alumni Association, following graduation.

Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of CO-YLF is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter, it is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to be changed. CO-YLF invests in our most precious resource, the youth who will transform our tomorrows.

WHY HAVE CO-YLF?

Youth who have disabilities have both more opportunities and more challenges than at any other time in our history. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has created unprecedented opportunities for youth to fully develop as positive, contributing members of our society. However, many need encouragement to develop as leaders in their own lives, and in their communities. CO-YLF allows youth opportunities to learn from each other and from successful elders who have disabilities. CO-YLF not only benefits the Delegates, but all young people, our communities in general, and the elders who assist in producing the conference.

HOW IS THE CO-YLF FUNDED?

All costs, including housing, meals, interpreters, personal care attendants, transportation, meeting space, operational costs, etc., are paid for through the SILC, fundraising, state agencies and corporate donations in addition to a grant from the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council.



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HOW MUCH DOES CO-YLF COST?

Participation for Delegates is free of charge. Actual costs are average \$1,500 per Delegate, which does not include in-kind goods and services donated by volunteers and supporters.

Don't take our word for it... Check out what YLF Alumni from other states have said:

"I learned that having a disability is a vital part of my life, but I can't let it control who I am. Leadership and self-advocacy are two of many things that must be used to take charge of my own life so I can be independent. I've learned to be proud of my disability and I've learned when I go home and back to school, I can finally fully explain to people what having a disability really means: 'I have a disability. I have a challenge in my life; an obstacle that will never go away, but I must embrace it and tell everyone that I'm not 'hearing impaired,' rather that I have a disability, but it doesn't have me.'" -A. P., 2014 Alumni

"(YLF) made me feel like a different person that I never felt like before. I actually chose to be here, to have a great time with the friends I made here. I want to thank the staff for telling me that I'm a great kid. All the people here have big hearts and the kids here made me happy. The greatest lesson I learned is that we all have disabilities." -D. W., 2014 Alumni

"The only way to get what you want is to advocate for yourself, take initiative! Just because we have a disability doesn't mean that we are weak and can't be independent. We just have to work a bit harder and in the end it makes us stronger. The best way to change how others think about us is to lead by example. We can be great people unhindered by our disabilities." -M.S., 2014 Alumni

"I've learned that people can do amazing things if they set their mind to it and with someone to help start their journey. Just because you have a disability doesn't mean there's anything holding you back." -K.M., 2015 Alumni

"No matter how big or small the obstacles are or how many obstacles you face, never give up and up you will be ultimately, and genuinely happy." -B. R., 2014 Alumni

"The greatest lesson I learned is that I am not my disability!!! I am awesome and I am not alone!" -A. C., 2014 Alumni



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DELEGATE APPLICATION

Name: _____ AGE: _____
 First MI Last

Gender Preference: _____ 2017/18 Grade: _____ T-Shirt size: SM MED LG XL XXL

Address: _____ (_____) _____
 Street/PO Box City State Zip Phone #

E-Mail: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____
 (Please Print) First MI Last

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

**** Please submit a letter of recommendation from an adult whom you are not related to.**

The Following information will be used to assign you to rooms, and groups. Please give as much data as possible using the attached sheet.

1. **Qualifications-** Explain why you feel you are qualified to be a delegate to this forum and please tell us why you want to attend.
2. **Leadership positions you have held or now hold-** In terms of leadership, please tell us about two people you have positively influenced in your life.
3. **Experiences as a Person with a Disability-** Describe two important experiences you have had as a young person with a disability
4. **Co-Curricular/extra-curricular activities-** Describe activities you are involved in or participate in?
5. **Short Term Goals**
6. **Long Term Goals**
7. **Where do you expect to be in 10 years?**



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STUDENT INFORMATION

PART I: REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Describe your disability or medical condition and how it may require special arrangements.
Check all appropriate boxes and give details.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blind/Visual Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf/Hearing Impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Braille | <input type="checkbox"/> Use sign language interpreter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use LARGE PRINT (font size) | <input type="checkbox"/> Use other communication method |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | (please specify) _____ |

Speech Impairment. Please tell us what kind and how we can help to communicate with you:

Learning Disability. Please tell us what kind and how we can help you (such as with writing):

Mobility Limitation. Please tell us what kind: _____

Can you easily walk up stairs (to second floor lodging)? Yes No

Wheelchair user (circle one) Manual Motorized

I need wheelchair accessible lodging Yes No

Special Equipment needed on-site that I will not be bringing (please list): _____

Special Equipment needed that I will be bringing (please list all, including type of wheelchair):

Personal Care Attendant needed. (Specify in detail any needs or services, such as feeding, dressing, overnight assistance): _____

NOTE: We will provide whatever appropriate assistance you request to accommodate your disability.



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PART II: MEDICAL INFORMATION

Medical Plan: _____

Name _____ *Address* _____ *City* _____

Policy Holder _____ Policy Number _____

Family Physician _____ () _____

Name _____ *Area Code* _____ *Telephone* _____

Person to notify in case of medical emergency:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____ () _____

Address _____ *City* _____ *Zip Code* _____ *Area Code* _____ *Telephone* _____

Are you currently under a doctor's care? If yes, please explain: _____

Are you currently taking any medications? If yes, what kind and what amount? _____

I manage my medication independently I need assistance managing my medication

Please list any medications you are allergic to _____

PART III: MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

If there is any additional information you feel we should know, please specify: _____

SIGNATURES REQUIRED BELOW:

We understand that each student delegate is responsible for any loaned property used during this Forum and for damages to the Forum facilities. We also understand that each student delegate is responsible for abiding by the rules and guidelines of the CO-YLF!

I, as parent/guardian, authorize medical professionals of the Colorado Youth Leadership Forum to act in my behalf in case of a medical emergency.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ *Date* _____

() _____ () _____
Area Code *Day telephone* _____ *Area Code* *Night telephone* _____

I understand that I must abide by the "***Rules and Guidelines for Student Delegates***" and that any serious violation of the rules may result in me being sent home at my parents'/guardians' expense.

Signature of Student Delegate _____ *Date* _____



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APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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3. **Experiences as a Person with a Disability-** Describe two important experiences you have had as a young person with a disability.
4. **Co-Curricular/extra-curricular activities-** Describe activities you are involved in or participate in?



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- 5. What things do you hope to be doing in the next 3 years--will you be going to school, working, living on your own?**

- 6. What things do you hope to be doing in the next 5 years--will you be going to school, working, living on your own?**

- 7. In 10 years, where will you be working? Where will you be living? What things will be happening in your life that make you happy?**



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RELEASE FORM

FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND QUOTATIONS

I, _____, give my permission for
(First and last name)

the Colorado Youth Leadership Forum to print or publish photographs and video tape of me, or to use quotations from me to publicize the Youth Leadership Forum.

Name: _____
(First and last name)

Signature: _____

Parent's/Guardian's

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____



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RULES OF CONDUCT FOR COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Youth, referred to as Delegates, are selected to attend Colorado Youth Leadership Forum based upon their leadership potential and skills. Delegates are expected to conduct themselves accordingly, and must:

- Be punctual and follow the scheduled program. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory. You must remain with your assigned group at all times. Wake up and lights out are scheduled for all participants.
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward peers, presenters, and CO-YLF staff.
- Respect the facilities (maintaining the condition of dormitory rooms and all other areas). Participants will be charged for property damage they cause, and for lost room keys or linens.
- When not in assigned groups, Delegates are to be in their own assigned rooms. All other campus residence halls and facilities are off limits. Visitation in common areas is allowed, when scheduled and supervised.
- Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances is strictly prohibited. (*Prescription or approved medications require documentation. Medication reminders and requested accommodations will be provided.*)
- Headsets, radios, electronic devices, and cellular phones are NOT permitted during scheduled CO-YLF activities. Use of such items will only be permitted during designated breaks, unless they have been identified as an accommodation. An emergency telephone number will be provided to Parents/Guardians/identified Supporters.
- Participate in one year of mentoring following graduation, and respond to questionnaires and surveys regarding CO-YLF, and post-CO-YLF mentoring experiences, as requested.

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

Any violations of these rules will result in Delegates being sent home immediately at the expense of themselves or their parent/guardian. Your application to Colorado Youth Leadership Forum confirms your acceptance of these rules. Remember the responsibility that goes with the honor of being selected to CO-YLF... and plan to have a great time!