



Wanted! Young Leaders to Take Charge of Their Futures!

What is the Youth Leadership Forum?

"YLF" is a unique training program for high school students with disabilities. It provides student "Delegates" with opportunities for learning, sharing, and developing the skills to become leaders in their schools, at work, within their families, and in their communities. YLF believes that young adults with disabilities learn best from role models who have successfully met the challenges of their own disabilities. By presenting these leaders in an atmosphere of encouragement, YLF offers Delegates the opportunity to learn from one another and skilled facilitators through shared problem-solving and teamwork.

What Happens at YLF?

YLF is a life-changing experience for Delegates. They participate in leadership training, explore career and life goals, network, develop informational resources, and explore state-of-the-art assistive technology. They hear first-hand the real-life experiences of successful adult leaders with disabilities and develop Personal Leadership Plans. On "Capitol Day", they tour the State Capitol, present "testimony", and meet with legislators and other senior state officials. They make new friends and enjoy social activities and entertainment created just for them. As alumni, they are expected to follow through on their Personal Leadership Plans and become leaders in their communities.

Who Participates?

Each July, approximately 25 rising high school juniors and seniors with disabilities who have demonstrated leadership potential and motivation gather from all across Virginia at the campus of Christopher Newport University. Typically, classes are split evenly between young men and women, and members of minorities make up one-third of all attendees. About three-quarters of Delegates have intellectual or learning disabilities; about one-third have sensory, mobility, or other physical disabilities. Since its start in 2000, Virginia's YLF has "graduated" over 150 new community leaders.

Be a Part of YLF!

- Apply to be a Delegate!
- Become a dedicated volunteer.
- Be a parent or school booster.
- Participate as a corporate investor.
- Fund a Delegate scholarship.

How are Delegates Selected?

Interested students submit an application form, personal essay, and letters of recommendation during a specified application period each school year, typically between November and late February. Delegates are then chosen through a competitive process that includes careful review of their applications and personal interviews coordinated by local Centers for Independent Living. Each year, YLF strives to ensure that Delegates represent Virginia's geographic and demographic diversity.

Who Sponsors YLF?

Based on the success of the first YLF, created by the California Governor's Committee on Disabilities, the National Office of Disability Employment Policy endorsed its replication throughout the country. Today, state sponsors include Governor's Committees and state Developmental Disabilities Councils such as the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

What Does it Cost to Attend?

It's free! As Virginia's sponsor, the Virginia Board currently covers the entire cost for Delegates to attend YLF, including transportation, room & board, instructional materials, activities, interpreters, personal care assistants, and individual medical care as required. Core funding for YLF is provided by the federal Developmental Disabilities Act. Additional funding comes from state sources, including scholarships from the Virginia Department of Education, and corporate and private donations.

For More Information or to Apply

Visit the Virginia Board's website at

www.vaboard.org/ylf.htm,
or contact the Board at

info@vbpd.virginia.gov
or 1-800-846-4464 (Toll-free
Voice & TTY).

The application deadline for the 2007 YLF is Friday,
March 23, 2007.



Testimonials and Achievements

What just a few YLF alumni are up to...

Sharing the Power 2000

Going the Distance 2001

David Harris (YLF 2001): "I'm currently a junior in the Computer Science program at Old Dominion University. I'm the treasurer of Catholic Campus Ministry at ODU and am also the Chair of the Association for Computing Machinery at ODU, a professional organization associated with the Computer Science Department."

Paving the Way 2002



Tim Moore (YLF 2002): "I am planning a service-learning project called Are You Ready? Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities-Part II". For more information about Tim's project visit www.voiceforgapkids.com.

Building Bridges Through Leadership 2003

Choose Your Own Path, Lead the Way! 2004

Leaders of Tomorrow, Rise to the Challenge! 2005



Charles Pierce (YLF 2005) graduated from high school and is now in the masonry/plasterer apprentice program at UVA Facilities Management. He is working forty hours a week and attending school at CATEC. "This program is great," Charles says, "I make a great pay check to learn my field and get full benefits." Charles explains it is a four year program and, at the end of four years, he will get his journeyman's card and can work right where he has been training, hopefully making a lot more money!

Victoria Wilson's (YLF 2005) biography was published in *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, and she was nominated for the National Honors Society! Victoria continues to be involved in high school activities such as "Project Discoveries".



Governor Tim Kaine and the Class of 2006

Believe, Imagine, Achieve, Succeed! 2006

William Crockett (YLF 2006) is a Global Messenger for Virginia Special Olympics and has been busy giving talks to various groups such as the Richmond Downs Syndrome Association, Henrico Special Education teachers, and Charlotte County middle school teachers. William is also currently working at Positive Vibe Café located in Richmond.



Pete Scampavia (YLF 2006) volunteered his time to be a mentor and guide for the freshman orientation at Yorktown High School.

Jenny Holden (YLF 2006): "The Youth Leadership Forum helped me learn to speak up for myself. Peggy O'Neill taught us it doesn't matter if you're tall or not. I am short. I have Down Syndrome. But I am more confident. I came home and worked helping little kids with disabilities in Fairfax County's Summer Recreation program. YLF helped me to reach my goal of helping kids."



Partners in Policymaking

Training Advocates to Step Up to Leadership Roles!

What is Partners in Policymaking?

"PIP" is an innovative advocacy and leadership training program for adults with disabilities and parents or guardians of young children with disabilities.

"Partners" are highly motivated individuals with a strong desire to understand and improve the disability services system and related public policy for themselves, their families, and others with disabilities.

What Happens at PIP?

Participation in PIP requires substantial commitment of time and energy, but Partners find the results to be well worth the effort. Advocacy training, resource development, and skills workshops are held monthly from September to November and January to May. Each monthly session begins on Friday and concludes late Saturday afternoon. Attendance and participation at all eight sessions is required.

Partners receive exceptional training and resources about current issues, state-of-the-art approaches, and best practices from nationally-recognized presenters and network with state and national leaders and each other. Curriculum includes the history of the Disability Movement, Independent Living, Natural Supports, Inclusive Education, Positive Behavioral Supports, Supported Employment, Effective Communication, Legislative Advocacy, Special Education Law, and much more.

What Happens After Graduation?

The PIP experience builds strong bonds between Partners. Relationships and projects initiated during PIP grow as they return to their home communities and continue to work together and with other "grassroots" advocates. Partner alumni also serve as mentors for each new PIP class. Today, nearly 300 graduates of Virginia's PIP program are organizers, role-models, and leaders in their communities.

Who Participates?

Each PIP class includes up to thirty men and women, fathers and mothers. Each either has a developmental disability or is the parent or guardian of a young child with a disability. They come from all regions of Virginia and all walks of life. They represent the full spectrum of intellectual, learning, sensory, mobility, and other disabilities. Their ages range from the twenties on up, their educational and socioeconomic backgrounds vary widely, and they are ethnically diverse. They all share a desire to learn and to make a difference.

How are Partners Selected?

Applications are accepted throughout the year, but must be received no later than the last business day of April to be eligible for the following fall. Individuals not already involved in advocacy organizations are especially encouraged to apply. After prescreening for basic PIP requirements, final selection of participants is made by a panel of Partner alumni. New Partners are notified of their acceptance in July for the class beginning in September.

Who Sponsors PIP?

PIP was created by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities in 1987 and has been replicated across the United States and United Kingdom. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities has sponsored PIP annually since 1994.

What Does it Cost to Attend?

There is no cost to participants. Using funds from the federal Developmental Disabilities Act and other public and private sources, the Virginia Board pays for transportation, lodging, meals, respite care, educational materials, and other associated costs.

For More Information or to Apply

Visit the Virginia Board's website at www.vaboard.org/policymaking.htm, or contact the Board at info@vbpd.virginia.gov or 1-800-846-4464 (Toll-free Voice/TTY).

The application deadline for the 2007-2008 PIP is Monday, April 30, 2007.

Since 1987, Partners programs have been implemented in 46 states, the Northern Mariana Islands, Netherlands, Virgin Islands, and the United Kingdom.

More than 13,000 Partners graduates are part of a growing national and international network of community leaders serving on policy making committees, commissions, and boards at all levels of government.



Partners in Policymaking



Testimonials and Achievements



Dana Yarbrough, Class of 1997: "My daughter, Brooke, was just 2 years old when I participated in PIP. Brooke was born 11½ weeks premature and has multiple physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities. When I participated in PIP, I set a vision for where Brooke would be in ten years but had not envisioned where I would be in ten years. Thanks to the advocacy skills I learned, I have had awesome opportunities to direct our state Parent to Parent office, coordinate projects at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU, present at conferences all over the country, and participate on over ten local and state committees and task forces."

Mark Russell, Class of 1997: "As I became more involved in local volunteer efforts through my involvement as a parent, I needed the knowledge



and confidence to become a more effective advocate in disability policy and community supports. Partners in Policymaking was exactly what I needed. After PIP, I switched careers to work in disability nonprofits, and I have never looked back."

Penny Altizer, Class of 1998: "I am the mother of a thirteen year old with cerebral palsy. Partners gave me the knowledge and strength to go to college to help others and make a difference. I have received three A.A.S. degrees, two B.S. degrees,

Robert Silverstein, attorney, nationally-recognized disability policy analyst, and Virginia PIP class of 2007 presenter, offers the following advice to Partners and all persons with disabilities and their families:

"Partners can strengthen their advocacy effectiveness by actively engaging in the political process. If all Partners received and responded to action alerts, and got others to respond as well, they could significantly impact the potential for systems change."

and am working on my M.S. Degree in Counseling. I am on the Tazewell County Disability Services Board, and I work for Cumberland Mountain Community Service Board as a Mental Health Social Worker. If it had not been for Partners, I would have not set goals for myself, accomplished them and then went on to set new goals. I want to make a different in the lives of others."

Vicki Beatty, Class of 2002: "Partners changed my life. It gave me the information and ammunition I needed to go out and make a difference in the state. Partners opened up a new career for me. When I graduated from PIP, I made a proposal to the Infant and Toddler Connection of Richmond for a family representative position (not volunteer but paid). They accepted, and I currently work 24 hours a week helping families whose children age birth to three have a developmental delay."

Ed Zeigler, Class of 2004: "I've always known that actions speak louder than words, and that's what Partners taught me, how to take action and not just complain, to make a difference. As a person with a disability, Partners made a difference in my life, and as a result I'm making a difference in the lives of others."

