

OUR MISSION

To promote and support the development of youth with disabilities so they become empowered as community leaders through education, mentoring, and peer support. We focus on four core areas of education, community, advocacy, and mentoring.

OUR HISTORY

In 1998 a delegation from Kansas attended a conference in California to learn about an innovative program providing leadership training for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Upon returning to Kansas, a steering committee was formed to plan the first Kansas Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). In 2001, with a grant from the Resource Center for Independent Living, the first Kansas YLF was held. After hosting five successful YLF's, it became apparent that additional programs for transition-age youth were needed. In 2005 a non-profit organization called the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (YEA) was established to house the YLF and other programs that empower young people with disabilities.

OUR GOVERNANCE

"Nothing about us, without us!"

The YEA organization is about, and for, youth with disabilities; therefore, it is also driven by youth. YEA is governed by a board of directors where adult mentors serve in an advisory capacity. However, the majority of the voting board members are youth with disabilities.

OUR PROGRAMS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE YOUTH...

Youth Leadership Forum



WHAT: The YLF is a motivational five day forum in which a group of students with disabilities stay on a college campus to learn about leadership, career options, advocacy, goal setting, and much more.

WHO: Approximately 30-40 high school juniors and seniors are chosen to participate each year.

ACTIVITIES: Large and small sessions, resource fairs, Day at the Capital, barbecue, mentor luncheon, talent show, and a dance!

BRINGING DISABILITY HISTORY AND PRIDE INTO THE SCHOOLS!

Our youth with disabilities will present to their peers on various topics surrounding disability heritage, culture, and the struggles and triumphs that mark our history. Learn what leaders, laws, and movements paved the road to the freedoms that we have today.

WHO: Presentations are available for post-secondary, high school, middle school, and elementary classrooms.



Disability Heritage Project

Community Awareness



★ "Creating Youth Agents of Change" - a health-related initiative encouraging youth to become their own advocates for healthcare.

★ Youth-led Community Presentations - our leadership team is available to speak to groups on a variety of topics including disability awareness, advocacy, sharing of personal stories, and a variety of youth-related issues.

★ We also provide information on independent living, community resources, mentoring opportunities, transition issues, and state and national disability initiatives.