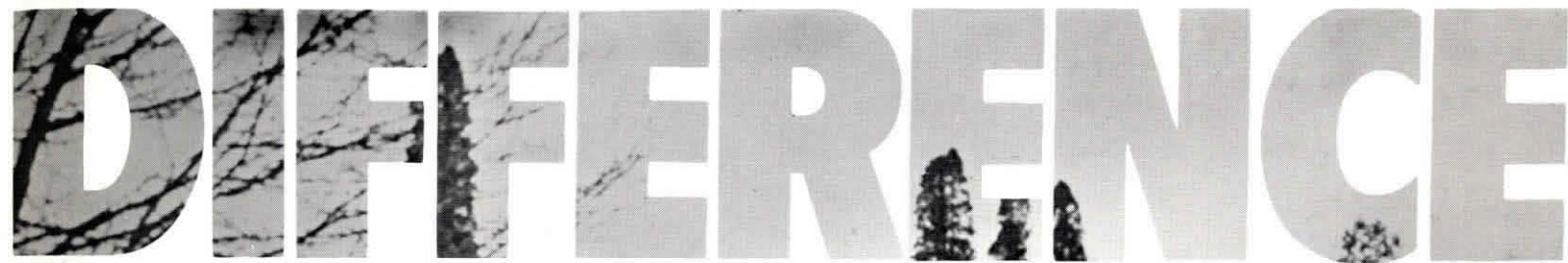
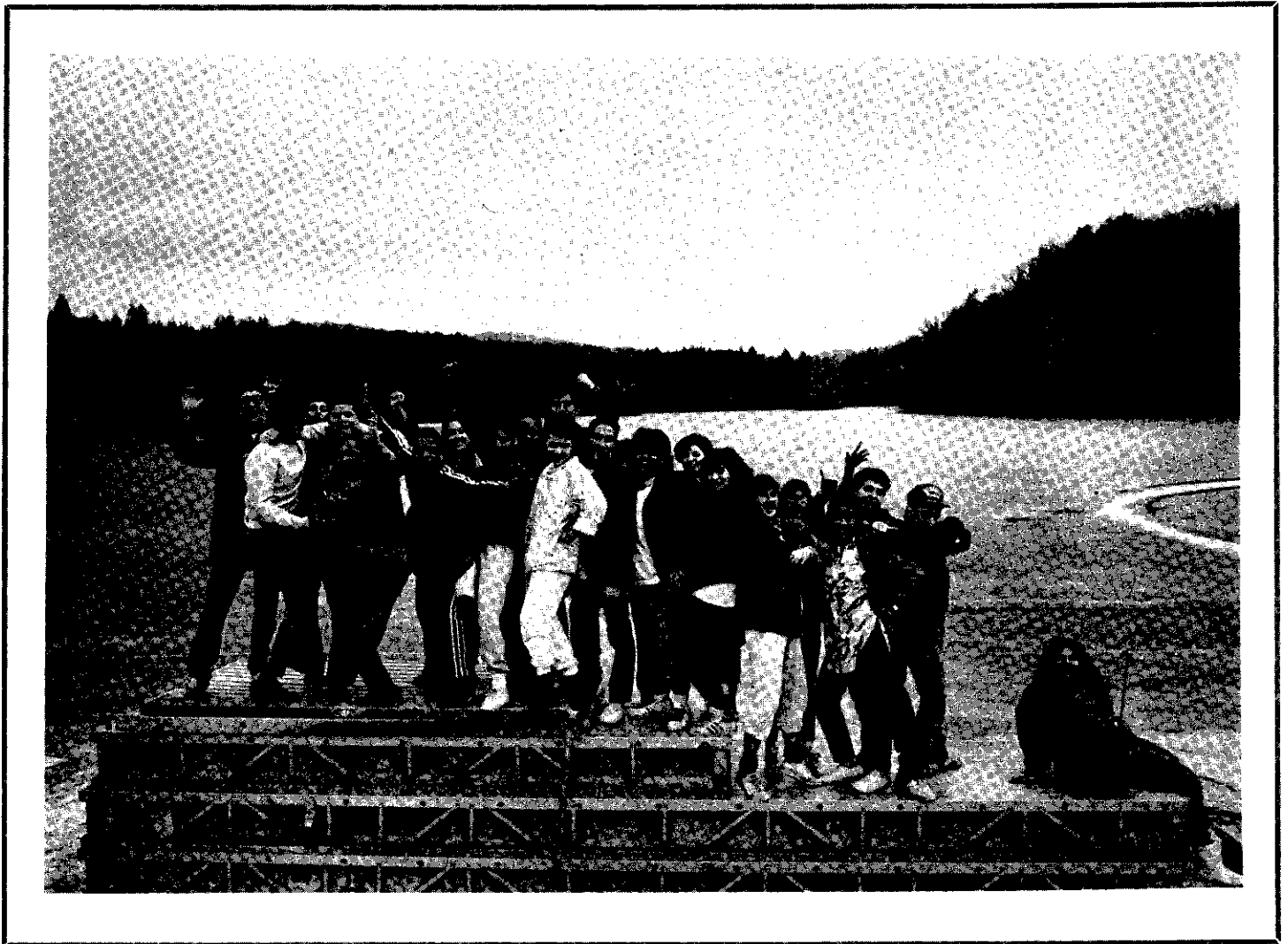


# WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



# **WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

## **A YOUTH PARTICIPATION TRAINING MANUAL**



THOMAS S. GULOTTA  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



KENNETH V. JENKINS  
CHAIRMAN

ANN M. IRVIN, CSW  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COUNTY OF NASSAU  
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August, 1990


Greetings from the Chairman and the Executive Director:

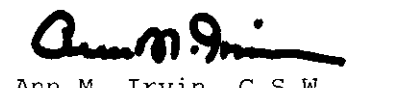
**WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE** is more than just a training manual. It is a statement. It is written for administrators, staff members, and sponsors of youth serving agencies and schools. It discusses not only how to design and implement a youth project but also why youth participation should be an integral component of all youth serving agencies and programs.

The Nassau County Youth Board is dedicated to the concept of youth participation and youth/adult partnership. We are proud of the young people in our project and their many accomplishments. And we firmly believe that what has been achieved by the youth of Nassau County can and should be replicated throughout the Nation.

This is the third printing of **WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**. However, it is not a revised edition. The text, the photos, and the credits are the same as in the original, because what was written in 1986 is as relevant for the 1990's as it was for the 1980's.

It is our hope that you will find this manual interesting, informative, stimulating, and useful. And that you will learn - as we have - that in preparing for the roles as the leaders of tomorrow, our young people can make a valuable contribution to society today.

  
Kenneth V. Jenkins  
Chairman  
Nassau County Youth Board

  
Ann M. Irvin, C.S.W.  
Executive Director  
Nassau County Youth Board

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**WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS, PARTICIPANTS, PARENTS, OUR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS WHOSE HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND BELIEF IN THE PROJECT HAS MADE THE YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT A SUCCESS.**

## FOREWORD

The Nassau County Youth Board entered its 21st year in 1986. It was established for the purpose of coordinating, funding and evaluating youth services in the county, with special emphasis on youth development and delinquency prevention. Community-based organizations, created with the assistance of the Youth Board, and operating on a contract basis, include outreach services for troubled teenagers, guidance oriented programs, recreation, tutoring, assistance for runaways and counseling. Each not-for-profit contract agency has its own local and non-salaried board which is responsible for the agency's fiscal soundness. Approximately 35,000 youths are served on an annual basis by this youth service delivery system.

Authorized by state and county law, the Youth Board expenditures for youth services in Nassau County are approximately 7 million dollars annually, provided primarily by Nassau County and the New York State Division for Youth. Other funding sources include the Federal government and municipalities in the county.

Eight years ago the Nassau County Youth Board created the Youth Participation Project (YPP). The goal of the Youth Participation Project (YPP) is to train young people to serve effectively now and in the future as citizens, decision-makers and leaders. YPP prepares young people to serve with adults as full voting members on boards and committees whose activities affect their lives.

The Youth Board believes that young people should have a voice in developing the goals, services activities, and approaches of the organizations that serve them. To do this, they must know how to design and develop projects and how to conduct themselves for maximum effectiveness within the groups in which they participate. They must know the basic rules for conducting an orderly meeting, what the guidelines are for a particular organization in which they are active and how to create guidelines where none exist. Young people must also know how to be assertive without being abrasive, how to differ with others in an amicable manner and how to present their own views factually and effectively.

The problem is that young people do not usually have these skills, and few adults who are active in community affairs think of bringing them in as apprentices to help them learn. YPP has been able to demonstrate that young people can join in partnership with adults in assessing youth needs, determining youth service priorities and shaping youth service systems. YPP has proven that youth participation on adult committees can benefit everyone. Our participants have influenced policy decisions of the Nassau County Youth Board. Their efforts have made a difference to the young people themselves in helping them to develop their individual leadership skills, and to the community they serve, Nassau County.

The Nassau County Youth Board believes that programs designed for young people have a better opportunity for success if the youths are viewed as part owners of the services rather than merely as clients. We have prepared this training manual with the hope that our experiences over the past seven years will help others involve young people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the programs in which they participate. This training manual is dedicated to the belief that informed, active young people *can* make a difference.

**“This training manual is dedicated to the belief that informed, active young people can make a difference.”**

**“Programs designed for young people have a better opportunity for success if the youths are viewed as part owners of the services rather than merely as clients.”**

*Kathryn Ramsey Chardron*



**“The two fundamental goals of education are personal empowerment and civic engagement. Personal empowerment requires that people be able to think analytically and examine information critically; that they be able to think creatively—go beyond the analysis and challenge assumptions, leap out of the present and imagine beyond where they are; and that they be able to act with a clear sense of integrity. Civic engagement requires that people learn how to use these skills while taking full part in the life of the larger community.”**

Ernest Boyer, President,  
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

## OVERVIEW

How often have we heard the admonition that our nation's schools do not prepare our young people for the "real" world? The answer is too often. And there is growing evidence that there is a widening gap between what many of our nation's educational policy makers perceive as the role of our schools and its relevance to the needs of society.

The mere fact that so many members of our society believe that there is a "real" world, a separate entity—apart from our schools—is a danger signal. John Dewey perceived an even greater danger—that of having our schools serve solely as a training base for the future and, thus, denigrating the value of the school experience while it is actually occurring:

"The idea of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. It omits, and even shuts out, the very conditions by which a person can be prepared for his future. We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything."

If education is to be responsive to the needs of society, then young people, as members of society, must share in the creation, management and evaluation of education or any other service that affects their lives. Adolescents must be provided with opportunities to interact with adults. They must be given increased responsibility and encouraged to develop the skills and abilities needed to make informed and considered decisions.

Joan Schine, Director of the Early Adolescent Helper Program, Center for Advanced Study in Education, the City University of New York, in New York City, has been the inspiration for several programs that have brought young people and adults together in an effective working relationship. Her philosophy comes alive in the following quotation:

"It is generally acknowledged that muscles, machinery and minds atrophy through lack of use. Conversely, machinery functions more smoothly when it is kept running and adequately fueled; muscles gain strength through gradual increase in the demands we make of them; minds become able to deal with increasingly complex problems and concepts as they absorb and use new information and ideas. Skills and abilities are, in other words, achieved gradually, through practice, repetition and the systematic development of a foundation."

"Young people need to learn how to make wise decisions in much the same way they learn other skills—by starting gradually, testing their strength, increasing the complexity and the urgency of the decisions they are called upon to make—until they can apply those skills as thoughtful, responsible adults. In making the transition from the role of child to that of an adult the young person needs opportunities to acquire decision-making skills through practicing them. Talking about the Australian crawl is interesting; reading about buoyancy and water displacement may be informative; but the only way to learn to swim is to be in the water."



**"Talking about the Australian crawl is interesting; reading about buoyancy and water displacement may be informative; but the only way to learn to swim is to be in the water."**

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES: putting theory into practice.**

**“Young people have a valuable contribution to make to their own learning, to the learning of others and to the success of the organizations that serve them.”**

The Nassau County Youth Board's Youth Participation Project (YPP) has for the past seven years trained and helped others to train adolescents, fourteen to twenty years of age, to serve as members of boards and committees of youth serving agencies. Through YPP, adolescents are able to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to work in partnership with adults. With their adult partners, YPP participants have contributed actively to their own learning, to the learning of others and to the success of the Youth Board.

Through our experiences we have learned that an authentic partnership between young people and adults is not easily achieved. Adults are accustomed to making decisions for young people and young people have been brought up to accept that adults make decisions for them. These two habits are hard to break. It is difficult for adults to accept that there are occasions when their ideas and opinions should not necessarily prevail. And young people, who have not dealt with adults as partners, often lack the confidence to work at their sides without feeling inferior. A tremendous amount of time and energy must go into reorganizing the structure of the school or agency and into changing the attitudes of people so that the young people can have legitimate power and responsibility within the organization. Equal time and energy must be put into training and supporting the young people if they are to be prepared to take on more and more responsibility.



**THE YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING BASIC PRINCIPLES:**

**THAT ADOLESCENTS ARE CAPABLE OF MAKING A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE AGENCY**

**THAT THE PROJECT SHOULD BE LONG-TERM RATHER THAN SHORT-TERM**

**THAT ADOLESCENTS SHOULD HAVE A DEFINITE ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP**

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES: putting theory into practice.**

### **VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION: making a difference.**

Since young people lack the life experience that adults have, their knowledge of the systems behind youth services and the need for being political is understandably less than that of adults. Without such knowledge, they can be more idealistic than adults, who are all too well acquainted with the pressures and conflicts caused by those systems. On the other hand, teenagers are more aware of the conflicts and pressures that affect them. They are closer to youth issues such as employment, education, substance abuse and sexuality. They bring vitality, new ideas and new talents to youth services, while adults provide stability, experience and technical know-how. Both contributions are valuable in the design, implementation and evaluation of schools and other youth serving organizations.

### **LONG-TERM COMMITMENT: more than just a bake sale.**

There are several kinds of activities that involve young people but which are not youth empowerment programs. Short-term, one shot service events such as a car wash, a Christmas party or a clothing drive are worthwhile events, but they are not the kind of programs that are the focus of this manual.

Also, much of the volunteer work traditionally reserved for young people does not meet the aforementioned criteria: for example, work in a hospital in which young people simply carry out menial and unchallenging tasks which are assigned by a supervisor. In this situation, there is no provision for critical reflection or for making independent decisions.

Experience alone does not automatically produce learning. There is a need to link theory with practice. Deliberate learning requires an ongoing, long-term commitment in which participants are given the opportunity to be engaged in significant tasks with real consequences, where the emphasis is on learning by doing with ongoing reflection and evaluation. It is equally important that the agency and its staff understand that the process of changing attitudes, restructuring the organization, and learning to share power takes time, it cannot be rushed.

**“Experience alone does not automatically produce learning. There is a need to link theory with practice.”**

**“Once a school or agency determines that it wants to involve young people in its organization, it must establish which decisions can be shared with the young people, and which decisions must remain the responsibility of the adults.”**

**DEFINITE ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION: being part of a team.**

Once a school or agency determines that it wants to involve young people in its organization, it must establish which decisions can be shared with the young people, and which decisions must remain the responsibility of the adults. This gives clear cut definition to the role of the youngsters in the organizational structure of the agency and reinforces the concept of youth-adult partnership.

Current management theory talks about involving all the players in a shared goal. Just as in “real” life where some people have more power than others, young people and adults do not have equal power. There are many instances when the bottom line reflects the legal responsibility of adults. This is especially true of financial matters in which age is a barrier and young people under eighteen years of age are prohibited from certain activities.

Administering a youth participation project within an agency as complex as the Nassau County Youth Board requires an awareness of the delicate balance that must be maintained between the specific goals of the young people and of the project and the broader concerns of the bureaucracy. The Nassau County Youth Board is responsible for administering and funding a wide variety of youth services. While the Youth Participation Project has a high priority, it is not the only priority of the agency.

In the seven years that the Youth Participation Project has been in existence, the participation of the teenagers has been so successful that the project has received ongoing support from the Nassau County Youth Board through increased funding and staffing. Also, YPP participants have consistently been given more responsibility in the decision making processes of the Youth Board. Three YPP members currently serve as full voting members of the policy making board of the NCYB. In addition, they represent the Youth Board at state and national conferences, where they conduct workshops and training seminars.

## YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP: a way of life.

It must be remembered that young people cannot exercise power unless adults agree to share power with them. In order for teenagers to gain power, adults must give some up. Very often, when adults give power to adolescents, they do so with specific expectations. Adults must understand that when they give up power, they give up control—that the expectation should be that young people will learn to make decisions, but that the decisions will not necessarily coincide with those that the adults would make.

In designing a youth-adult partnership, the adults should establish a set of realistic goals that encourages the involvement of the young people in their attainment. At the same time, if there are going to be limitations placed on the role of the young people in decision-making, such limitations must be clearly established from the start. Communication is the key. It is of prime importance if the partnership is to succeed. With this clear understanding, young people and adults can sit down together and design a program which is based on the goals of the organization and on the needs and concerns of the young people. The beauty of this kind of program is that it is custom tailored to its environment.

Once the role of the young people has been clearly established, the school or agency must make a commitment to provide the much needed moral and financial support. The adults who have administrative responsibility must communicate to their youthful partners that they value their opinions and, whenever possible, provide them with opportunities to exercise legitimate power. There must be an understanding among all involved as to when decision-making rests exclusively with the adult members, when it can be shared by the adults and the young people, and when the young people can make decisions on their own.

The importance of effective communication cannot be overemphasized. It is important to have young people explore, through experiential exercise, lecture and discussion, some barriers that exist when they find themselves in a working relationship with adults. We have found that our "Youth-Adult Partnership" workshop is an effective vehicle for the achieving this objective (see Appendix A).

Throughout the workshop, young people exchange roles with adults. Each participant is given first hand experience of what it is like to be in the other person's shoes. We are well aware that this is not "real" life. However, our hope is that communication between young people and adults will be enhanced by this experience. We stress the fact that this is an experiential workshop. All participants are encouraged to dress comfortably and to arrive at the workshop prepared to enjoy themselves. It is important that everyone understands the nature of the workshop. Participants should be made aware of the fact that the workshop will involve "role playing" and other experiential activities.

**"It must be remembered that young people cannot exercise power unless adults agree to share power with them."**



## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

**“ There is a saying that ‘success is a journey, not a destination.’ Youth-adult partnership is not an event, it is a process.”**

There is a saying that “success is a journey, not a destination.” Youth-adult partnership is not an event, it is a process. The young people in the program will grow as they gain more experience and acquire the tools for decision-making. Over a period of time they will develop a relationship of mutual respect with their adult partners, as well as respect for themselves and the process itself. This will result in an increased role in decision-making and a greater influence in determining the goals and future direction of the school or agency.

There are times when the staff and young people of the Youth Participation Project, advocating for their programs, may find themselves in conflict with other Youth Board staff members, who are advocating for theirs. Resolution of such conflicts requires negotiation and compromise. The knowledge that the project enjoys the support of the board and its Executive Director is an important starting point in negotiations. Trust is built on a give and take relationship that develops over a period of time. The history of YPP provides numerous examples of conflict resolution. The issues involved have ranged from procedural to emotional, some being resolved in one meeting; others involving weeks, months, or even years of negotiation.

A particularly controversial issue concerned the “We Can Make A Difference” conference on teenage suicide prevention (see Appendix F). In proposing this topic, the YPPers tested the resolve of the Youth Board to support the concept of youth participation, even in the face of controversy and criticism. The willingness of the board to take a risk and support the judgment of the young people built a mutual trust that carried over to the next year when the young people reciprocated by supporting a conference on youth employment that was initiated by the adults.

Much of the history of the Nassau County Youth Board’s Youth Participation Project reflects periods of struggle, trial and error. YPP has had its share of ups and downs. We have learned from both.

While advocates of youth participation have a strong belief in the ability of young people to share power effectively with adults, they are equally strong in their conviction that the key to successful youth participation is effective preparation. Carefully developed programs of recruitment, training, support and evaluation are essential ingredients of a successful youth participation program.

**WE BELIEVE SOME OF THE FEATURES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR PROGRAM ARE:**

**THAT THE MEMBERSHIP REFLECTS A CROSS-SECTION OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COUNTY**

**THAT EACH YOUNG PERSON RECEIVES INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION**

**THAT PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ARE TAUGHT SPECIFIC SKILLS**

**THAT LEARNING RESULTS FROM ACTUAL EXPERIENCES WITH REAL LIFE CONSEQUENCES**

**THAT THE CONCEPT OF “YOUTH TEACHING YOUTH” IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROGRAM**

**THAT PARTICIPANTS ARE PROVIDED WITH ON-GOING SUPPORT**

**THAT PARTICIPANTS SHARE IN THE PROCESS OF REFLECTION AND EVALUATION THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM YEAR**

## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

### **RECRUITMENT OF A CROSS-SECTION: the richness of diversity.**

Throughout the year specific program information is disseminated to community agencies, libraries, schools, religious youth groups, and others affiliated with the delivery of youth services. Interested young people are referred from the above sources and by YPP graduates. Ads placed in local newspapers are another successful method of recruiting candidates. The Youth Participation Project attempts to recruit a cross-section of young people, representing a variety of interests, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds, who are 14-20 years of age, live in Nassau County, have a sincere desire to learn leadership skills, and have the ability to make commitments.

Recruitment is important because the success of the program depends in great part on the young people selected to participate in the project. There are no short cuts. It is a year-round activity involving correspondence and on site visits with schools and other youth serving agencies to insure that they clearly understand the type of young people YPP wishes to recruit. Schools often recommend their "super stars," young people who are already over-extended. Agencies, on the other hand, often hesitate to recommend young people because they think the project is looking for young people who are already leaders, not their population of "troubled" youths. Youth Caucus members, young people who have graduated from one year of YPP and have returned for a second year to assist staff with the management of the project, are the ones best able to explain the project. Throughout the year, YPP staff and Youth Caucus members provide consultation and training seminars to schools and agencies, and attend conferences where they distribute information about the program and encourage young people to apply.

Applications are reviewed by staff and by Youth Caucus members. Everyone who applies to the project receives an interview: first, a group interview, and then, an individual interview. Group interviews are scheduled for approximately six to ten young people. The purpose of the project and other pertinent information is presented to the young people by staff and Youth Caucus facilitators. The group interviews allow the young people to meet other potential recruits and to ask questions about the project.

After the group interview, an individual interview is scheduled with each young person. If there is concern about drug and/or alcohol abuse and/or severe psychological problems, the project director and a NCYB social worker conduct the interview. Young people with severe problems are not admitted to the project at this time. However, admission is not denied to them permanently. They are encouraged to get help. If they do, their applications are reconsidered.

Group and individual meetings are always conducted in a friendly, yet businesslike manner. The attitude of the staff and Youth Caucus at these meetings can set the tone for the rest of the year. Staff and Youth Caucus members who interview the new recruits attend a training seminar on how to conduct an interview. Their sensitivity, or insensitivity, toward the new young people throughout the entire interviewing process often determines whether or not the young people will join the project.

A special effort is made to recruit less motivated youths. Follow up phone calls are made to young people who fail to show up for interviews, and, if necessary, special meetings are set up in the young person's home community. Young people who are hesitant to commit themselves to the project are invited to attend the orientation in August or the September or the October training seminars where they can see first hand what being a participant in YPP actually means. New recruits are accepted into the project until the first three day training seminar in November. Approximately forty to forty-five young people are accepted into the program each year.

**"Recruitment is important because the success of the program depends in great part on the young people selected to participate in the program."**

**"Youth Caucus members, young people who have graduated from one year of YPP and have returned for a second year to assist staff with the management of the project, are the ones best able to explain the project."**



## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

**“Because the young people participate in the design, implementation and management of their own learning, they have invested themselves in the goals of their own learning, and are self-motivated.”**

### **INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING: recognizing the uniqueness of each young person.**

The young people selected for enrollment in YPP are required to sign an individualized learning contract. A learning contract is a formal agreement between the YPPER and the staff. The contract is written by the young person, reviewed by the staff and signed by both. It is a formal statement of the goals the participant hopes to achieve during the program year. It is helpful in evaluating the performance and progress of the YPPER. Because the young people participate in the design, implementation and management of their own learning, they have invested themselves in the goals of their own learning, and are self-motivated.

Sometimes personal problems interfere with a young person's ability to meet the minimum expectations of the project. It is the role of the staff to be aware of and sensitive to the young people and to give them the support they need to work out their problems as they arise. Such signals as a change in mood or a missed meeting can alert staff to a possible problem. A well placed expression of concern or a simple statement that “We missed you last night. Is everything OK?” may prevent a young person from dropping out of the program. It is not unusual for adolescents to feel insecure and not part of what is going on, especially when they have personal problems on their minds. A staff member reaching out and providing support may be all that is needed to turn a potential drop out into a productive YPPER.

YPP staff arranges to meet individually with participants on a regular basis to design, update and evaluate their contracts. These meetings can take place informally at local fast food restaurants, at the office, or at any other mutually convenient location. Where the meeting takes place is not as important as the quality of the dialogue. The real value of these meetings is in the staff member and the participant getting to know one another. School problems, home problems, peer pressure and other personal matters often surface. The major challenge in designing a contract is in combining the problems the young person is facing with developing concrete skills that will improve the quality of their daily lives.



## LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.

### SKILLS TRAINING: providing the tools.

The Youth Participation Project provides monthly skills training seminars to address and clarify obstacles that emerge when young people begin to serve on boards and committees. YPP training seminars cover such topics as parliamentary procedure, assertiveness training, public speaking, systems negotiation, youth-adult partnership and effective communication skills.

Specific dates for training seminars are scheduled during the summer. Participants are given these dates when they attend the orientation in August. Selection of seminar topics is based on evaluations from the previous year. Seven Saturday seminars are held from 10 A.M.-3 P.M. at colleges, libraries and public buildings centrally located throughout the county. In addition, two weekend training seminars are held, one in November and one in March or April (see Appendices A-E for a sampling of our training seminars).

The November three day training is designed and presented by the Youth Caucus. This seminar focuses on group building and communication skills. Participants begin to develop the skills necessary to work constructively with peers of differing socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. By the end of the seminar, participants design and adopt an internal organizational structure in which to carry out the management of YPP. Ad hoc committees are formed to achieve the specific goals established by participants during the weekend.

Over the years the Ad hoc committees of the Youth Participation Project have been responsible for an impressive array of accomplishments. Among them are the design, implementation and sponsorship of five county-wide youth leadership conferences; advocating successfully for legislation that allows young people sixteen and seventeen years of age to serve as full voting members of not-for-profit corporation boards of directors; and the publication of articles in national magazines (see Appendices F-H).

The final three day training seminar is designed by the YPPers themselves. The purpose of this seminar is to allow time for completion of Ad hoc committee assignments and to provide training in areas in need of improvement. For example, the young people may wish to be given additional training in problem solving, assertiveness, or Roberts Rules of Order. Most importantly, staff and participants reflect on and evaluate their experiences in the project.

It is important that the young people share in the design, implementation and management of their own learning. Therefore, training seminars are designed so that Youth Caucus members and participants can, with training and support, present them. In addition, we have found that effective skills training takes advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. While the calendar of activities is set, the agenda of topics is flexible after December in order to conform to the goals and objectives established by the young people during the three day seminar in November.



## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

**“The experiential approach to education offers opportunities for real life problem solving in which feedback is uncontrived and immediate and results in real life physical and emotional consequences.”**

### **LEARNING BY DOING: the essence of experiential education.**

The experiential approach to education offers opportunities for real life problem solving in which feedback is uncontrived and immediate and results in real life physical and emotional consequences. Each September, the newly recruited participants are formally linked up with an apprenticeship, a direct experience working with adults on a planning committee. YPPers serve on committees of the Nassau County Youth Board and its contract agencies. The majority serve as full voting members of the Nassau County Youth Board's Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC). CPC involves lay people from throughout the county in the planning of youth services. Since its inception, YPP has placed approximately three hundred young people on CPC. Through their apprenticeships, the young people have been able to contribute to the policy making decisions of the Nassau County Youth Board.

Working with adult members of CPC in both small subcommittees and large discussion groups, YPPers select issues of concern and significance to young people. They research these issues and make recommendations to the Nassau County Youth Board and to other municipalities in the county on how to deal with them.

A very delicate balance must be maintained between YPP and CPC. Involving forty new young people each year as members of CPC requires time, patience and sensitivity on the part of staff members and returning CPC members. Activities must be designed which combine the needs and interests of the returning members with the needs and interests of the new YPPers, whose commitment to CPC may be for only one year. These activities must also meet the needs of the Nassau County Youth Board. The Youth Board expects CPC to make recommendations which may influence future funding guidelines.

Since attendance at CPC meetings is compulsory and a requirement for graduation from YPP, it is important that the work of CPC be stimulating and interesting, and that the staff be sensitive to the special needs of the young people. It is essential for the young people to develop interpersonal relationships with the adult committee members, staff members and with other youth participants. Such relationships will help them develop a sense of commitment to YPP, CPC and the Nassau County Youth Board. This is especially important because young people often have stereotypes about themselves, adults and society. They are unaccustomed to being influential.

With time and training YPP participants can become knowledgeable and influential members of CPC and of other boards and committees. Through the years, members of the Youth Participation Project have been given more and more responsibility in the decision making process of the Nassau County Youth Board. It is their participation on CPC that helps them to prepare for roles with authority and increased responsibility such as the work of the Nassau County Youth Board and other policy making bodies in the county.

A word of caution, it is one thing to place young people on the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC), and quite another to place them on boards and committees where youth participation is not a priority. CPC is geared to the needs of young people and encourages them to fully participate in its proceedings.

Placing young people on policy making boards without providing them with an appropriate support system does them a disservice and dooms them to failure. A strong foundation of training and hands on experience must be built if they are to have any success. It must be remembered that before YPPers are placed as full voting members on the Nassau County Youth Board, they have a year under their belts as members of CPC. This training and experience takes on even greater importance when young people are placed on boards and committees that do not have the same sensitivity to their needs as does CPC... and most boards do not! CPC is the exception, not the rule.

## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

**Two of the policy making boards and committees on which YPP, Youth Caucus members and graduates are currently serving are the Nassau County Youth Board and the Contract Review Committee.**

### **Nassau County Youth Board**

Nassau County Youth Board policy is determined by a board of twenty voting lay members, plus eight ex-officio members representing most of the county departments involved with youth related services. The Youth Board has two seats reserved for young people who are 16-20 years of age. Over the past seven years six young people from the Youth Participation Project have filled these seats. Presently, there are three young people who are full voting members of the board. One young woman has served as a member for the past two years, and two more young people were recently appointed to the board by the County Executive.

Candidates for board membership are selected by YPP staff and Youth Caucus members. The names of approximately five young people, YPP participants, are submitted to the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Nassau County Youth Board. They, in turn, decide which of the candidates will be submitted to the County Executive for appointment to the NCYB. All NCYB members, youths and adults, are appointed by the County Executive.

Once the young people become members of the NCYB, their relationship with the project changes. Project staff can no longer provide them with the same type of support because of a potential conflict of interest. The Youth Board is ultimately responsible for the management of the Youth Participation Project. The young people therefore have a role in the supervision of the project and access to confidential information that would be inappropriate to discuss with staff members. Confidentiality is a sensitive issue in the the best of circumstances. This new status can be very awkward and confusing to everyone. The transition from project member to board member must be handled with discretion and sensitivity.

**“Placing young people on policy making boards without providing them with appropriate support does them a disservice and dooms them to failure.”**



## **LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.**

**“Young people need to gain experience in and knowledge of the systems behind youth services if they are to make informed decisions on boards and committees.”**

### **Contract Review Committee**

The Contract Review Committee (CRC) is a committee of the Nassau County Youth Board. Youth Caucus members serve as full voting members of the panels of CRC. They are not, however, full voting members of the NCYB.

Panel members review and evaluate contracts that are submitted to the Youth Board by agencies for funding. NCYB staff members provide on-going support for members of the panels. This is no easy task, because reviewing proposals is tedious and complicated. Each panel reviews approximately six proposals; each proposal is approximately fifty pages long. The young people, especially, need strong support and guidance from staff.

The Youth Participation Project attempts to prepare caucus members who wish to serve as members of panels by familiarizing them with the YPP proposal. They review the old proposal and assist project staff with the writing of the goals and objectives, the methodology and in developing the new budget. The YPP proposal is submitted to the Long Range Planning Committee, another committee of the NCYB, for review and evaluation. Youth Caucus members do not review their own proposal when they serve as members of the various panels.

It takes time for young people to learn how to review and evaluate a funding proposal. Therefore, we rely heavily on the experience and expertise of the adult board and staff members when reviewing the proposals. It is our belief, however, that young people need to gain experience in and knowledge of the systems behind youth services if they are to make informed decisions on boards and committees. For that reason, their participation on the CRC panel review committees is encouraged.



## LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.

### YOUTH TEACHING YOUTH: developing a mentor system.

Another aspect of the Youth Participation Project is that of "youth teaching youth." This is accomplished through the Youth Caucus. The Youth Caucus is comprised of young people who have successfully completed a year as members of the Youth Participation Project. They have committed themselves to continuing to learn communication and leadership techniques and, in turn, sharing these skills with others. During the summer they meet with project staff to design a contract for their participation in the Caucus. Each contract describes specific assignments which must be completed prior to graduation from the Youth Caucus (see Appendix I). In addition, they assist staff with the recruitment of the new participants.

Youth Caucus members help design, implement and evaluate YPP activities; they serve as consultants for organizations, agencies and schools interested in designing youth participation programs. They serve as mentors, role models and trainers for the new YPPers. Their relationship with the new YPPers is often the key to the successful involvement and participation of the new participants. Throughout the year, Youth Caucus members have periodic meetings with the Director to reflect on and evaluate their experiences. They are, in turn, evaluated on their performance by project participants and staff.

The Youth Caucus is the core group of the project. When Youth Caucus members successfully come together as a group and commit themselves to sharing their new found skills with others, they can be like a magnet which draws others to them. However, one of the most difficult aspects of being a Youth Caucus member is making the transition from participant to role model and trainer.

Most young people are unaccustomed to leadership roles. Being in a position of power can help them gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to improve the world around them. Some, however, allow this power to go to their heads. They may aggressively seek to extend their power and, in some cases, abuse it. When this takes place within the Youth Caucus, it has an adverse effect on the entire project, especially on the newly recruited YPPers, who look to the Caucus members for guidance and training.

Supervision of caucus contracts involves more than just meeting periodically with individual caucus members. It often involves special preparation in the form of research, written or telephone communication with several agencies, boards or committees and a variety of unforeseen logistical problems. This is especially true of contracts that support agencies, boards and committees other than the Youth Participation Project.



**"Being in a position of power can help young people gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to improve the world around them."**

## LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.

**“Young people are not mini adults.”**

### **ON-GOING SUPPORT: helping YPPers over the rough spots.**

An important factor to remember is that young people do not have the same independence as adults. They are, for the most part, financially dependent on their parents. They have school responsibilities that more often than not have the highest priority on their time. And, finally, they do not have the last word in decision making, having to defer to their parents, teachers, coaches and school administrators.

To illustrate the effect that this lack of independence can have on the project, consider this example:

Joe, a paid staff member, designed a workshop for the three day training seminar. When the group met to board the bus for the training site, Joe arrived late and explained that his parents would not permit him to go on the trip. He was being punished for some poor grades that he received in school. It did not matter to his parents that Joe had responsibilities to the project, that others were also being “punished” along with their son.

Most likely the situation described above could have been avoided through better communication among Joe, his parents and project staff. Parents must understand the commitment involved when their children become members of YPP and the young people must understand the balance that they must achieve among their home, school and project responsibilities. Through on-going communication and support, the project staff orchestrates this precarious balance. Some examples of how YPP provides on-going support for participants follow:

#### **Parents and Guardians**

When a young person is selected to participate in the project, a letter is sent to the parents congratulating them for their teenager's accomplishment. Included in the letter is a list of responsibilities for participants, a calendar of events and activities, and suggestions of ways in which parents can assist and support their child's participation in the project. Parents are also invited to attend the orientation meeting and selected training seminars. Contact with the parents is maintained periodically throughout the year by telephone and written correspondence.

#### **Schools and Youth Serving Agencies**

Letters of congratulation are also sent out to the schools and youth serving agencies that referred young people to the project. Included in the letter is a list of responsibilities for participants and a calendar of events and activities. School and agency administrators are invited to the orientation and selected training seminars. In addition, YPP conducts conferences and training seminars specifically for schools and agencies.

Our basic philosophy is that participation in the project should not interfere with school attendance. However, on occasion, participants are asked to attend training seminars, meetings or conferences during school hours. In such cases, project staff members work closely with both parents and school officials. Incidentally, some schools are presently considering the awarding of school credit for participation in YPP.

#### **Expenses**

Most young people do not earn enough money to provide for transportation, lodging and meals. Consequently, YPP pays for all project related expenses. Automobile expenses are paid by participants and reimbursed at the rate of 21 cents per mile. Public transportation, train, bus and taxi fare, is reimbursed dollar for dollar. Since reimbursement takes time, it is extremely important that staff be sensitive to the financial needs of the young people.

#### **Transportation**

Transportation is a constant source of difficulty in a geographic area as large as Nassau County. The young people are made aware of bus and train schedules at the orientation. However, these timetables do not always conform to scheduled YPP

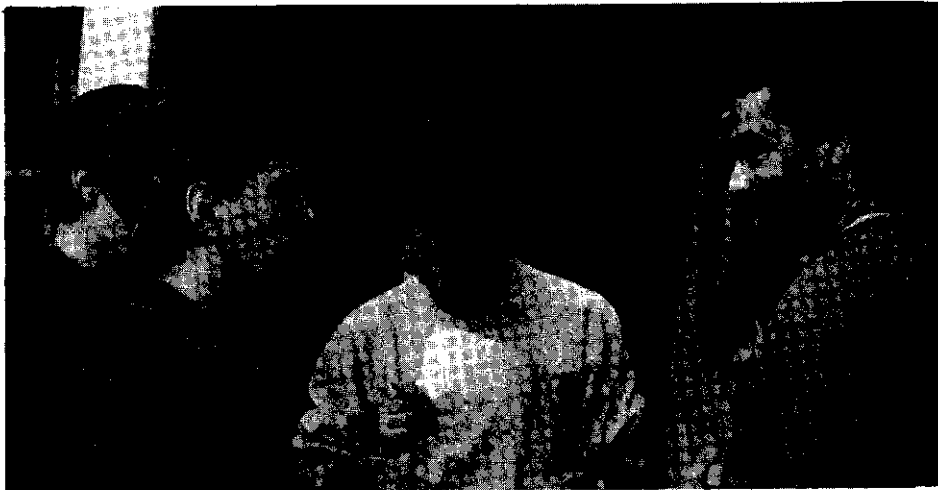
## LESSONS LEARNED: periods of struggle, trial and error.

activities. This is especially true of CPC meetings, which are held on weekday evenings. Many parents are concerned about their children traveling considerable distances after dark.

In order to deal with the transportation dilemma, adult YPP staff members are often called upon to provide rides. Special insurance coverage is provided in the YPP budget for this purpose. Also, at the beginning of each CPC meeting, adults are requested to assist the YPPers in need of rides home that particular evening.

### Recognition

While the project staff believes that involvement in YPP has intrinsic value in and of itself, it understands the need of all people, young and old alike to gain recognition for their achievements. First year participants receive certificates and Youth Caucus members receive plaques. Letters of commendation are mailed to the parents, the schools and contract agencies of the YPPers. Parents, teachers, school officials and contract agency staff members are invited to attend orientations, training seminars and award ceremonies. In addition, announcements of events and accomplishments are sent to the local media. The culmination of the year is the graduation ceremony. Flowers, good food and a distinguished guest list all contribute to an atmosphere of recognition for a job well done.



### REFLECTION AND EVALUATION: where do we go from here?

Throughout the program year participants reflect on and evaluate their experiences in YPP. The whole process of reflection and evaluation is built on the concept of youth-adult partnership. The young people are viewed as part owners of the project rather than as clients.

Throughout the year a variety of approaches are employed in the reflection and evaluation process. Written evaluations are used in at least two training seminars and oral evaluations are used at all seminars. A combination of written and oral evaluation is used at the two three day seminars in both small group and large group settings. By using a variety of evaluative techniques, the chance that individual YPPers will feel "left out" of the process is greatly diminished. Those who do not feel comfortable making oral presentations have the opportunity to make written evaluations, and vice versa. Also, those who feel shy in large groups may participate more actively in the small group sessions.

The feedback at the end of each training seminar is reflected on and evaluated by project participants and staff. When there is a consensus that there is a need for change in either content, process or direction of a project activity steps are taken to implement the change. Thus, the reflection and evaluation process has a direct influence on decision making within the project.

**"The evaluation of YPP is built on the concept of youth-adult partnership."**



## **SUMMARY: building a bridge of trust between generations.**

**“Youth participation programs are powerful educative vehicles for promoting personal empowerment, intellectual development and civic engagement.”**

Youth participation programs are powerful educative vehicles for promoting personal empowerment, intellectual development and civic engagement. Programs in which young people and adults work together, whether formal or informal, publicly supported or privately funded, school related or not affiliated with our schools, should be viewed as a sound investment in our society's future. A mentor system develops as the young people who participate in such programs benefit from the knowledge and experience of their adult partners. They in turn, become receptive to the concept of working in partnership with adolescents when they reach adulthood. They have already experienced the satisfaction of serving as mentors to other youths recruited into the program.

While the primary goal of the Youth Participation Project is to involve adolescents in the design and implementation of youth serving programs, there are secondary benefits that result from participation in the project. The participants achieve personal growth and development and acquire self understanding, insight and self worth. Often, they improve their academic skills and become more aware of community, social and global problems. They also grow socially, learning to work as part of a team.

Many of the skills that they learn are universal in nature, such as leadership skills, communication skills and assertiveness. Some are specific, such as Roberts Rules of Order. There is benefit to society as well. As YPP develops more productive, informed, compassionate citizens, and graduates a new crop of participants each year, the pool of potential community leaders is substantially expanded.

Finally, the Youth Participation Project has strengthened the sense of purpose of the Nassau County Youth Board. The hard work and dedication of the young people reflect the vested interest they have in the decision-making process.

Perhaps the most important thing that adults can do is to look for situations in which they can share power with the younger generation. School administrators and directors of youth serving agencies should actively seek opportunities to involve young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of the services that affect their lives. If they follow that path, the resulting trust between generations will become the rule rather than the exception and youth-adult partnership will become a way of life.



## THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN SOCIETY: a potpourri of quotations.

"First, they (young people) strengthen the organization by keeping it grounded in the concerns of its constituents. When young people are involved in an organization, they remind adults of youths' real needs and concerns. Second, young people are often effective at gathering information about youth because they are trusted by their peers and can put the information in context. With training, they can do thorough and accurate research which becomes the basis for institutional change efforts. Third, young people are often helpful in suggesting strategies for change. They are not handicapped by stereotypes and they are directly involved with the situation to be changed. Thus they may have practical and innovative ideas. Finally, with training and support, young people can intervene at policy levels to improve institutions by sitting on boards, negotiating with officials and testifying before legislative bodies."

U. S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Youth Participation in Youth Advocacy: A Practical Guide for Developing Programs*.

"We must create new models for adults who can teach their children not what to learn, but how to learn, and not what they should be committed to, but the value of commitment."

Margaret Mead

"Some believe that there is nothing that one man or woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills. Yet many of the world's greatest movements of thought and action have flowed from the work of a single individual, and many of these were young people."

Senator Edward Kennedy, eulogy to Robert Kennedy

"In my work in American schools, whenever I have seen students able to contribute as adults to community work, to urban renewal, to hospitals, to youth counseling centers, in tutoring situations, in day care, in farm work, I have observed a glow of well-being, a kind of relief as of a new found equilibrium, which I have not found elsewhere."

Charity James

"The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity."

Benjamin Disraeli

"The tragedy of our times is that our young people are being taught that they must never make a mistake—that to make a mistake is unforgivable. All great men have made mistakes. If you're afraid of making a mistake, then it means you will stop functioning."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"Not by age, but by capacity is wisdom attained."

Plautus

"Ways must be found to share the educational mission with the broader society and to provide opportunities for children and youth to be more seriously involved in their communities."

Dan Conrad & Diane Hedin, *Executive Summary of the Final Report of the Experiential Education Evaluation Project*.

"The generation gap has always been bridged by the young in spirit of any age who continually restore their own confidence and creativity by paying attention to the thoughts, hopes and dreams of young people and not dismissing them with self-assumed superior wisdom."

"The Spirit of Youth," *The Royal Bank Letter*.

# APPENDIX A YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOP

Designed by Veta Sheppard-Hayes, Coordinator of Training, Nassau County Youth Board, Mineola, New York



## Group Size:

Twenty participants, half adults and half young people.

## Physical Setting:

The meeting room should be spacious, allowing for movement of furniture and participants. Carpeting allows participants to sit comfortably on the floor.

## AGENDA

- 1. INTRODUCTION** 10 Minutes
  - A. Why we are here
  - B. Review the agenda
  - C. Introduce training staff
- 2. "REACH FOR THE SKY"** 25 Minutes

Participants are divided into small groups of 5-7 persons and asked to build structures using drinking straws and masking tape. Each group has a ten minute time limit, five minutes working in silence and five minutes with verbal communication, to build their structures. The structures are judged on height, stability, and creativity. (*Youth Empowerment: A Training Guide*, pp.48-50. See references.)
- 3. WHAT IS YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP?** 20 Minutes
  - A. Brainstorm ideas, record on newsprint
  - B. Review ideas listed
  - C. Training staff provides personal examples of effective youth-adult partnerships
- 4. ROLE PLAYING, WHAT IS IT?** 10 Minutes

Members of the training staff demonstrate role playing by acting out situations in which youth training staff members exchange roles with adult training staff members.
- 5. FISH BOWL EXERCISE** 50 Minutes

Chairs are arranged in two concentric circles facing inward. The trainers ask for volunteers (half the group) to "fish bowl" a mock board or committee meeting. They will be observed by the remaining members and receive feedback about their participation in the fish bowl (see Appendix C). The observers sit in the outer circle, participants who do the role playing sit in the inner circle.

The observers receive observation forms which ask them to provide feedback about whether or not their assigned character and the situation was believable. They are asked specifically to respond to questions about how the youth and adult characters worked together.

The situation and the characters of the fish bowl are individually designed for each group of participants. For example, if the participants wish to start a youth employment program, the situation in the fish bowl focuses on starting an employment program. Careful design of this exercise is key to the success of the workshop.
- 6. BRAINSTORMING** 10 Minutes

Large group brainstorms possible guidelines to facilitate young people and adults working in partnership with each other.
- 7. WRAP UP** 10 Minutes

A member of the training staff summarizes the discussion.
- 8. EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING SEMINAR** 10 Minutes

In evaluating the training seminar, participants are asked to take a positive, constructive approach. Those aspects of the seminar that they consider satisfactory are listed on newsprint as "PLUSES." Those aspects that they feel need improvement or modification, are listed on newsprint as "WISHES."

## APPENDIX B ORIENTATION

Designed by the 1985-1986 Youth Caucus Nassau County Youth Board, Youth Participation Project, Mineola, New York

### Purpose:

To present information about the Youth Participation Project and the Nassau County Youth Board, to provide an opportunity for the new participants to meet their peers, Youth Caucus members and staff, to build trust, to stimulate interest, to provide an opportunity for the Youth Caucus to design and implement a training seminar .

### Group Size:

Approximately 70 young people and adults.

### Physical Setting:

We have always used a conference center and nature preserve operated by the Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks. We selected this site for the orientation because the grounds are beautiful and the rooms in the conference center are large enough to accommodate a large group of people. We attempt to make the new participants feel special at the orientation. There are garden flowers on all of the tables and colorful decorations throughout the conference center.

### AGENDA

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>1. REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS</b>  | 30 Minutes |
| <b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>   | 5 Minutes  |
| A. Why we are here   |            |
| B. Review the Agenda   |            |
| C. Introduce Youth Caucus members  |            |
| <b>3. WELCOME FROM YPP STAFF</b>   | 5 Minutes  |
| <b>4. SCAVENGER HUNT</b>   | 40 Minutes |
| Participants are given a sheet of paper with a list of forty topics printed on it.   |            |
| They are asked to find a different person for each topic. For example, they are asked to find someone who: can rollerskate backwards, has asked the boss for a raise, speaks two languages fluently.   |            |
| <b>5. EXPLANATION OF YPP</b>   | 20 Minutes |
| Youth Caucus members describe the project using concrete examples and personal experiences.  |            |
| <b>6. CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NASSAU COUNTY YOUTH BOARD</b>   | 10 Minutes |
| <b>7. WHAT IS CPC???</b>   | 10 Minutes |
| The Coordinator of the Comprehensive Planning Committee(CPC) and a Youth Caucus member explain, in simple and easy terms, the purpose of CPC.  |            |
| <b>8. DOT GROUPS</b>   | 35 Minutes |
| Participants are divided into small groups and given an opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the project. Each group is facilitated by Youth Caucus and staff members. The term "dot" group comes from the color coded dot placed on the name tags of participants. Parents, school administrators and other adult guests are put into a separate group. |            |
| <b>9. LUNCH AT THE BEACH</b>   | 60 Minutes |

## APPENDIX B ORIENTATION

- 10. KNOT GROUPS** 15 Minutes  
Participants are divided into small groups of 8-10 people. They are asked to stand in a circle facing each other, put their right hand into the center of the circle and grasp someone else's hand (not the hand of the person on their immediate right or left). Then, do the same with their left hand and, without letting go, attempt to untangle themselves.
- 11. "WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"** 60 Minutes  
Participants view a movie that shows ways young people can make a difference in their communities. A group discussion follows.
- 12. DISTRIBUTE NOTEBOOKS** 10 Minutes  
Participants are given loose-leaf notebooks with information about the project, a calendar of events and other pertinent information.
- 13. GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK** 30 Minutes  
Staff and Youth Caucus members review the guidelines for feedback.
- We feel that one of the most important things that YPP participants learn from the project is how others see them. This helps them become aware of themselves and how they effect others, thereby improving their ability to have a positive effect on others (See Appendix C).
- 14. EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR** 15 Minutes  
Using the guidelines for feedback, participants are asked to evaluate the seminar.



## APPENDIX C GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK

Adapted from the Counselor Training Short Term Client Systems Training Manual Developed by the National Institute of Drug Abuse

### 1. Give feedback that is specific rather than general.

DO NOT SAY: "You are domineering."

DO SAY: "You are not listening to what I say. I feel as though I must agree with what you are saying or be attacked by you."

### 2. Give feedback that focuses on behavior rather than on the person.

Refer to what a person does rather than what you think or imagine he is.

DO NOT SAY: "You are a loudmouth." (This implies a fixed personality trait.)

DO SAY: "You talked more than anyone else in this meeting." (This allows for the possibility of change.)

### 3. Give feedback that is helpful.

Feedback can be destructive when it serves only your own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

### 4. Give feedback that focuses on behavior that the receiver can reasonably be expected to do something about.

DO NOT SAY: "Your soft voice irritates me; I wish you didn't have it."

DO SAY: "You speak very softly and it is hard to hear you. Could you talk a little louder?"

### 5. Give feedback that describes the effect the receiver's behavior has on you.

Avoid asking, "Why?"

DO NOT SAY: "You are always jumping up and down. Why in the world do you do that?"

DO SAY: "You are always jumping up and down and it makes it difficult for me to concentrate on what you are saying."

### 6. Give feedback that is well-timed, as soon after the behavior as possible.

### 7. Give feedback when the receiver is ready to hear it.

Feedback should be solicited, never imposed.

DO NOT SAY: "I can see that you are crying and very upset, even so, let me tell you how I felt about your actions."

DO: Wait until the receiver can hear or accept feedback.

### 8. Give feedback that is clear and can be easily understood by the receiver.

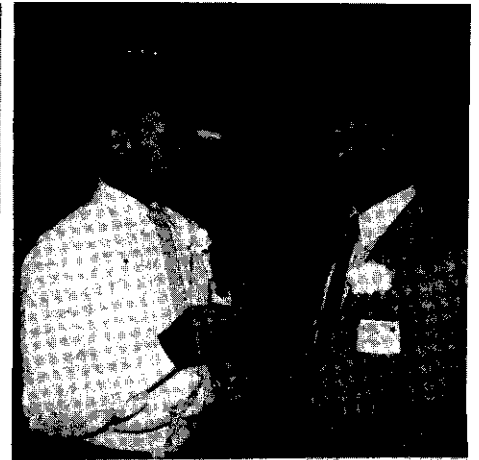
### 9. Give feedback in appropriate doses.

Do not give more than the receiver can process at one time. To overload a

person with feedback is to reduce the possibility that it can be used effectively.

DO NOT SAY: "I think you need to look at the audience directly, speak up, stop bouncing up and down, stop moving your hands around and stop smoking while talking."

DO SAY: "You do not look directly at me when you talk to me. I find that distracting."



# APPENDIX D NOVEMBER THREE DAY TRAINING SEMINAR

Nassau County Youth Board, Youth Participation Project, Mineola, New York



## Purpose:

To have participants begin to develop the skills necessary to work toward common goals with peers of differing socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds; to have participants design and adopt an internal organizational structure in which to carry out the management of YPP from November until May; to provide an opportunity for Youth Caucus members to design and implement a training seminar.

## Group Size:

Approximately 35 YPPers, 10 Youth Caucus members and 10 staff members.

## Physical Setting:

Our three day training seminars have, for the past four years, been held at a YMCA conference center situated on a small lake and surrounded by hundreds of acres in upstate New York. The beautiful grounds allow for the Outward Bound activities and the conference center is perfect for our indoor activities. Most of our workshops are held in a large room with a fireplace and comfortable couches.

## AGENDA

### FRIDAY

1. BUS DEPARTS 4:30 P.M.
2. BUS ARRIVES AT HOLIDAY HILLS,  
ROOM ASSIGNMENTS 6:30 P.M.
3. DINNER 7:00-8:00 P.M.
4. "SETTLING IN" WORKSHOP 8:30-11:00 P.M.
  - A. Welcome
  - B. Rules and Regulations:
    - no sex
    - no drugs and/or alcohol
    - no fighting
    - participants must attend all workshops
  - C. Introduction of Training Staff
  - D. Three Short *High Energy* Ice Breakers
  - E. Review the Agenda
  - F. "What Is Leadership?"

Participants are divided into "home" groups of 5-7 persons and asked to list characteristics that an individual must possess in order to be a leader. Each group reports into the large group and the characteristics are listed on newsprint. The "home" groups are then asked to decide on the three most important characteristics. Each "home" reports into the large group and explains why it thinks its three characteristics are important. All of the characteristics are listed on newsprint and the large group is asked to create a list of ten characteristics an individual must possess to be a leader.
  - G. One Short *High Energy* Ice Breaker
5. MUSIC AND POPCORN BY THE FIRESIDE 11:00 P.M.

## APPENDIX D NOVEMBER THREE DAY TRAINING SEMINAR

### SATURDAY

1. **BREAKFAST** 8:00-9:00 A.M.
2. **YOUTH CAUCUS MEETING** 9:00-9:30 A.M.  
Youth Caucus members meet to review and evaluate how the training seminar is progressing.
3. **"OUTWARD BOUND/INWARD BOUND" WORKSHOPS** 9:30-12 Noon  
Participants are divided into two groups. Group A joins the Outward Bound trainers and Group B joins the Inward Bound Trainers.  
**Outward Bound:**  
Participants are divided into four small groups. Each small group is put through a series of experiential exercises which focus on communication skills and group building. Our Outward Bound workshops are designed and implemented by:  
Kit Thompson and Doug Bowne  
Higher Horizons Program  
P.O. Box 340  
Johnstown, New York 12095  
  
**Inward Bound:**  
Participants create their own T-shirts by printing designs on the shirts with fabric ink and vegetables.
4. **LUNCH** 12 NOON-1:00 P.M.
5. **OUTWARD BOUND/INWARD BOUND (continued)** 1:00-3:30 P.M.  
Group A joins the Inward Bound trainers and Group B joins the Outward Bound trainers.
6. **REFLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR** 3:30-4:30 P.M.  
Participants reflect on their experiences during the day. They are asked to list the various skills they needed to participate in the Outward Bound activities and in the Inward Bound activities. This list is compared to the list which was created Friday night. A single list of characteristics an individual must possess to be a leader is created by the group. This list will be reflected on and refined throughout the program year. In addition, participants are asked to evaluate the workshops. They are asked to take a positive, constructive approach. Those aspects of the workshops that they consider satisfactory are listed on newsprint as "Pluses." Those aspects that they feel need improvement or modification, are listed on newsprint as "Wishes."
7. **FREE TIME** 4:30-6:30 P.M.
8. **DINNER** 6:30-7:30 P.M.
9. **REVIEW OF CPC** 7:30-8:30 P.M.  
Review and evaluation of the CPC apprenticeship led by the coordinator of CPC and a Youth Caucus member.
10. **"MURDER ONE" WORKSHOP** 8:30-10:30 P.M.  
A group problem-solving exercise taken from:  
*A Handbook of Structured Experiences For Human Relations Training,*  
Volume VI. University Associates, La Jolla, California, 1977.
11. **VARIETY SHOW** 11:30 P.M.



## APPENDIX D NOVEMBER THREE DAY TRAINING SEMINAR

### SUNDAY

1. **BREAKFAST** 8:00-9:00 A.M.
2. **YOUTH CAUCUS MEETING** 9:00-9:30 A.M.
3. **"INTERNAL MANAGEMENT" WORKSHOP** 9:30-11:30 A.M.
  - A. One Short *High Energy* Ice Breaker
  - B. YPP staff members discuss the various projects undertaken by previous YPP participants. This is the time when the new YPPers begin to take on the management of their own project. They may form three committees. One of the committees must be responsible for the design and implementation of the final three day training seminar. The other committees may take on projects selected by the participants at this time.
4. **BREAK** 11:30-11:45 A.M.
5. **REFLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE WEEKEND** 11:45-12:30 P.M.

Participants are asked to complete a written evaluation. When everyone has completed the form, participants are divided into their "home" groups to discuss their evaluation of the weekend. Each "home" group reports to the large group. Their evaluations are written on newsprint, then presented to staff and the Youth Caucus, who, while participants were meeting, also met to reflect on and evaluate the weekend.
6. **LUNCH** 12:30-1:30 P.M.
7. **FREE TIME** 1:30-3:00 P.M.
8. **DEPART** 3:00 P.M.

# APPENDIX E INTRODUCTION TO GIVING A PRESENTATION

Designed by Veta Sheppard Hayes, Coordinator of Training, Nassau County Youth Board, Mineola, New York

## Purpose:

To give participants direct experience in giving a presentation, to give Youth Caucus members an opportunity to present a training seminar.

## Group Size:

Twenty Participants.

## Physical Setting:

The meeting room should be spacious, allowing for movement of furniture, equipment and participants.

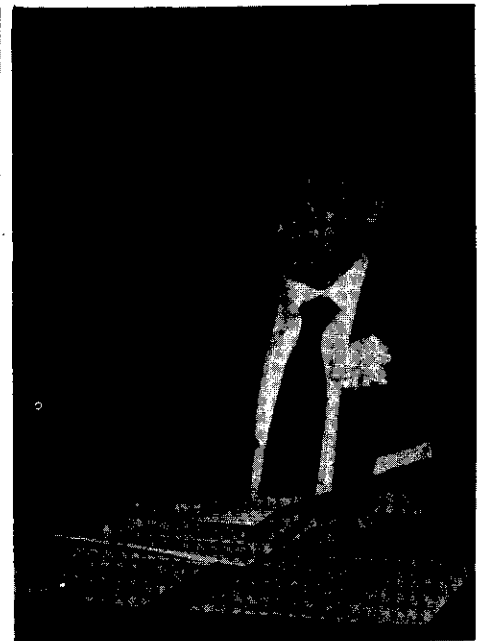
### AGENDA

1. **REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS** 9:30-10:00 A.M.
2. **LARGE GROUP WARM UP EXERCISE** 10:00-10:15 A.M.
3. **INTRODUCTION** 10:15-10:20 A.M.
  - A. Why we are here
  - B. Review the agenda
  - C. Introduce the training staff
4. **EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECHES** 10:20-11:00 A.M.

Participants are asked to speak extemporaneously (without preparation) on a specific topic for 1 minute. Topics are light hearted in nature. For example, a participant may be asked to speak for one minute about why peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth, how to tie a knot, or to describe a favorite meal.
5. **LECTURE** 11:00-11:45 A.M.
  - A. Preparing to make a presentation
  - B. Types of presentations
  - C. Method and format for delivery
  - D. How others see me
6. **DISTRIBUTE TOPICS FOR TWO MINUTE SPEECHES** 11:45-12 NOON

Participants may select one of four possible topics. Topics for the two minute speeches concern vital issues such as: world hunger, terrorism, and arms control. Resources are made available for participants to research their topics.
7. **LUNCH AND PREPARATION OF SPEECHES** 12 NOON-1:00 P.M.
8. **GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK** (see Appendix C) 1:00-1:15 P.M.
9. **PRESENTATION OF TWO MINUTE SPEECHES** 1:15-3:15 P.M.

Each participant will require the following amount of time: two minutes to give their speech, two minutes to play back and view the video tape, and two minutes to receive feedback.
10. **EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR** 3:15-3:30 P.M.



**“Youth Helping Youth.”**  
MAY, 1985



In response to the growing problem of adolescent suicide, the Youth Participation Project (YPP) has designed a unique educational conference. YPP believes that young people can and should be involved in helping to find solutions to the problems that affect their lives. This conference was designed by a committee of young people and adults to train and educate participants in the areas of depression, stress management, and suicide prevention. Adults from each school or community-based agency are urged to bring one or two young people with them to this important conference. There is no charge for attendance and lunch will be provided.

**AGENDA**

- 1. REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS** 8:15-9:00 A.M.
- 2. WELCOME AND OPENING STATEMENTS** 9:00-9:30 A.M.  
Members of the Youth Participation Project
- 3. PRESENTATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM** 9:30-10:00 A.M.  
Joel J. Flax, Executive Director  
Runaway Youth Coordinating Council, Inc.  
Hempstead, New York
- 4. PERFORMANCE** 10:00-11:00 A.M.  
Herricks Improvisational Theatre  
Herricks High School  
New Hyde Park, New York
- 5. MORNING WORKSHOPS 11:15-12:15 A.M.**
  - A. Dealing With Friends About Suicide:  
What To Look For, How To Help
  - B. Coping With Stress
  - C. School Based Suicide Prevention Programs
  - D. Adolescent Depression
- 6. LUNCH** 12:15-1:15 P.M.
- 7. “Youth Helping Youth”**  
Father Francis Pizzarelli, S.M.M.,  
Executive Director of Hope House Ministries  
Port Jefferson, New York
- 8. AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS (SAME CHOICE AS MORNING WORKSHOPS)** 1:45-2:45 P.M.
- 9. CLOSING STATEMENTS** 2:45-3:15 P.M.  
Wendy LeNoble, M.A.,  
Community Education Coordinator,  
Middle Earth Crisis Counseling and Referral Center Bellmore,  
New York
- 10. EVALUATION OF THE DAY** 3:15-3:30 P.M.  
Members of the Youth Participation Project

## APPENDIX G

The following article was published in the May/June 1984 issue of NEW DESIGNS for Youth Development. It was written by Michael Beloff a Youth Caucus member.

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**“Throughout the course of history, young people have been instrumental in the development of society. By providing wit, humor and a wealth of refreshing ideas, they often have provided a bright ray of hope in a world darkened by despair. Yet in this land, where young people have fought and died for the defense of their homeland, their voice in matters of government has often been silenced.”**

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Michael Beloff

# The Albany Connection: A Young People's Success Story

It started as an idea—that young people should have a say in policy decisions that affect them. Then, like a seed, it spread roots and set itself firmly in the minds of a few people. Then it started to grow. This idea was focused on a bill that would allow more young people to sit on boards of directors of non-profit agencies that deal with kids. On August 1, 1983, the bill became a law. However, it was not as easy as it sounds. A lot of hard work went into getting this bill passed. This article will tell you how we did it and will, we hope, be able to help someone else to get legislation about which they feel strongly passed.

The new law affects chapter 701 of the not-for-profit corporation law in relationship to membership on boards of directors. According to the old law, non-profit agencies organized for youth education or recreation could have one director who was at least 16 years old. The new law states that recreational and youth development and delinquency prevention agencies may have up to one-half of their working quorum be youths between 16 and 18, provided that number is prescribed in their certificate of incorporation.

While this paper deals mainly with this year's activities concerning the new law, it should be known that the original groundwork started two years ago. At that time, five young people from Youth Participation Project; Kathryn Chandross, project director; and Adrienne Flipse, a member of the Nassau County Youth Board, went to Albany to advocate for the original bill. Unfortunately, due to some miscalculations, legal questions and bad luck, the bill was introduced too late and was not passed by both houses.

This year's work began on November 10, when Michael Beloff was selected to be the Youth Caucus coordinator of

The Albany Connection, the name of the Youth Participation Project. Over the next two weeks, project members who wished to be on this committee met and decided to continue working on the bill from the previous year. They prepared a presentation for the Nassau County Youth Board, seeking permission to go to Albany to advocate for the bill. On December 15, the proposal was accepted and was passed unanimously by the board.

In preparation for the trip to Albany, each member of the committee went out and raised \$50 to help pay for the trip. Money came from schools, businesses, charitable organizations and other places. Committee members wrote to legislators about the bill, telling them about it and asking for their support and sponsorship. Youth groups throughout the state were asked for support, which came from the Dutchess County Youth Board and the New York State Parent-Teacher Association.

On February 28, 1983, 11 people traveled to Albany to advocate for the bill. First, they met Senator Tully, the primary sponsor in the Senate. It was then that a legal question was raised about the number of youth to be allowed on boards. It seemed that if the original "up to one-third" was kept in, there were certain instances where there could be more youth than adults at board meetings. Recognizing that the legislators would never vote legislation in this form, a compromise was reached, changing the bill to allow up to one-half of a working quorum by youth, thereby eliminating this hazard. The delegation went around meeting members of the Corporation Committee, the sub-committee that the bill had passed through to get to the Senate. They also took a tour of the Capitol Building, the Courts of Appeal and got to observe the Senate and Assembly in action. The next day resulted in

good feelings from the legislators.

The bill passed the Corporation Committee on April 18 and soon passed the Senate, and then ran into a snag. In the rush to get the bill passed, the committee had overlooked the fact that the bill was Republican-sponsored in a Democratic Assembly. This was at a time when the two houses were blockading each other's bills, and this one got caught in the middle. In order to get the bill passed, the committee had to do some quick thinking. It tried to get a Democratic sponsor, but to do so required another compromise. Education committees had to be removed from the bill. Then, after a lot of phone calls and worrying, the new bill passed through both houses. On August it was signed by the governor.

For anyone who might in the future want to advocate for a similar bill, here are some hints:

1. First, get an idea. Then write it into a bill, making sure that it is legally sound.

2. Before going to your capital, write to legislators to get support or sponsorship. With the letter, get bi-partisan sponsoring for the bill if you can (sponsoring by both parties).

3. Go to your capital to meet with legislators personally. Make sure to see the members of the sub-committee that

your bill has to go through. Try to have made appointments before you go up.

4. Make sure that the bill gets on the calendar early.

5. Follow up on the bill. Write the legislators urging them to pass it, and include a rationale, telling them why they should. Also try to get media coverage, every little bit helps.

6. Be willing to compromise.

7. Be patient, things like this don't happen overnight. The Albany Connection was extremely lucky and pleasantly surprised when its legislation was passed in just two years.

For further information about the Nassau County Youth Participation Project contact the:

**Nassau County Youth Board**  
**400 County Seat Drive**  
**Mineola, NY**  
**(516) 535-5827**



## APPENDIX H SELECTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO SERVE AS MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

### INTRODUCTION

The Youth Participation Project (YPP) is a demonstration project undertaken by the Nassau County Youth Board in 1979 to determine whether or not it is possible to involve young people in youth service planning. Federal, state and local funding sources more and more mandate youth participation in the planning and delivery of youth services. They do not offer ways to accomplish this, however. Many agencies and organizations have attempted youth participation components in the past, but with little or no success.

**YPP has been able to demonstrate that young people can join in partnership with adults in assessing youth needs, determining youth service priorities, and shaping youth service systems.**

Many organizations want to include young people on their boards, but ask "How?" Some organizations have tried youth participation on boards in the past, but found young people not attending meetings, or providing sought after input. Eventually they dropped off the boards. Understandably, these organizations are reluctant to try it again.

We at YPP are concerned about both situations. We feel that young people not only can, but should serve effectively as members of the boards of directors of public and private, non-profit organizations and agencies. These boards make decisions that often have major impact on the lives of young people. Young people should be a part of the process of these boards.

The young people of YPP have been struggling with the problem of how to help agencies recruit and maintain effective youth participation on their boards. They have been meeting with adult and youth resource people as well as with other youth groups to discuss these matters. The following guidelines are the result of their work. Many apply to selecting any individual, youth or adult, for a board seat. Each, however, has special importance to your selection of young people to serve as board members.

### GUIDELINES

Young people are not "mini-adults." They often lack the kinds of life experiences that help adults fit into being effective board members. Young people who are potential board members also have special needs which must be met if they are to effectively serve on your board. We recommend the following guidelines be used:

1. Your young board members should be 16 to 20 years of age. They must be available for board and committee meetings, especially meetings held at night. This can be very difficult for a young person under age 16.
2. They must agree to give the necessary time to being board members. It's important to remember that young people are usually just as busy as adults. They may be involved in activities besides school (i.e., jobs, extracurricular activities) which will take away from their ability to prepare for and attend meetings. Like all prospective board members, they should understand exactly what is expected of them and be willing to commit time to the board and tasks assigned.

Board and committee meetings should, of course, be convenient for all board members, including youth. If your board meets during the day, and is unwilling to change, be sensitive to the fact that young people must receive permission from their parents and school administrators in order to miss school. Letters should be sent from your board to the parents and school administrators explaining the purpose of the board and listing all meeting times and dates. Also, be sure that the young people can attend late evening, weekend, and special meetings if your board meets on this basis more than infrequently.



The young people on your board may not be able to attend all meetings. If you do not expect this of the adults on your board, please do not expect it of the young people. If there is an attendance policy, please explain it before the young people join the board.

3. Transportation can be a problem in ability to attend meetings. If meeting places are not easily accessible (that is, within walking distance,) you should make transportation arrangements. This may mean having another board member volunteer to provide rides to and from meetings. The transportation schedule should be consistent.

4. Some of the most important issues facing young people on boards and committees are transportation, their relationship with school officials, their relationships with parents and their relationships with the other members of the board or committee. A good way to deal with all these issues is to assign a mentor, an older member to provide ongoing support. Mentors can serve as a liaison between the board, the family and the school. They can also provide transportation to and from the meetings and can use the travel time to discuss the meetings and to provide support for the active participation of the young people.

5. The young people should be chosen from among those already active in community affairs so that they have a knowledge of the community. A recommendation from a community person might be helpful. The nominating committee might also ask for an informal resume, in which the prospective young board members could outline their community activities, achievements and interests.

6. An ability to relate to adults as well as peers is essential. If all board members are to work effectively, then all, regardless of age, should be able to communicate effectively and work together. Most likely, most of the other people on the board will be adults. It's hard to be alone. You should consider having more than one young person on the board.

7. The term of office should reflect the realities of the lives of young people. You may find young people who will be able to make valuable contributions to your board, but may be forced to appoint/elect them to a shorter term because of plans to go away to college.

8. Once recruited as board members, young people should receive an orientation session on the agency and the board. They should also be briefed on board issues before attending their first meeting. They need information if they are to make intelligent decisions.

9. Young people should be voting members of the board. Voting power, and hence real power, should not be denied because of age. We are aware of existing state laws which limit full board membership to individuals over 18. Work to have this changed. We did!!! In the State of New York it is now legal to have young people who are 16-17 years of age serve as full voting members of boards of not-for-profit youth serving agencies.

Until then, try to work out a mechanism for registering the feelings of a 16-17-year old board member and considering these in decision making. If you cannot do so, you are better off not including any one under 18 on your board. In any case, your own voting procedures or Robert's Rules of Order should be explained in a special orientation session.

10. Do not expect young people to be representative of the total youth population of any given area. They can, should and will make responsible decisions based on their knowledge of the community. But they are no more representative of all the young people of the community than any one adult member is representative of the total adult population of the area.

11. Finally, this is in no way a total picture of all of the considerations necessary in choosing youth for seats on your board. Individuals and agencies differ in needs and interests. You will want to consider these differences in deciding how to recruit and select young people for seats on your board.

# APPENDIX I YOUTH CAUCUS CONTRACTS

Nassau County Youth Board, Youth Participation Project

A list of Youth Caucus contract assignments for the 1985-1986 project year follows. Some of the contracts are assigned to one caucus member, others are assigned to several caucus members.

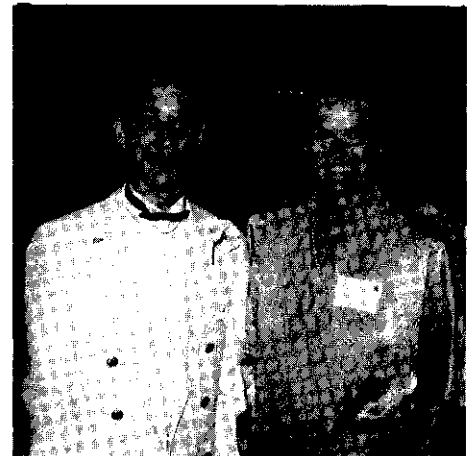
## 1985-1986 Youth Caucus Contracts

### Contracts that support the management of YPP:

- To help design and implement the November three day training seminar.
- To present the "Introduction to Giving a Presentation" training seminar.
- To present the "Youth-Adult Partnership" training seminar.
- To design and present a "Decision Making" training seminar.
- To serve as a liaison for YPP to the Comprehensive Planning Committee.
- To assist with the coordination of the "Albany Connection"
- To assist with the coordination of a youth leadership training conference for three hundred young people and adults.

### Contracts that support other agencies, boards and committees:

- To help design and participate in a peer counseling program for Southside High School, Rockville Centre, New York.
- To serve as a member of the Forum on Youth Employment Planning Committee.
- To serve as a founding member of the Board of Directors of a youth run newspaper.
- To serve as a member of the Nassau County Youth Board's Contract Review Committee (CRC).
- To serve as a member of Governor Mario M. Cuomo's Council on Youth Suicide.
- To serve as a member of the New York State Youth Council, Albany, New York.
- To serve as an announcer for the "Youth Appreciation Week" talent show for the Nassau County Youth Board.
- To serve as a member of the Board of Directors of Elmont Youth Outreach, Inc., Elmont, New York.
- To serve as a member of the Nassau County Youth Board.





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\*Whitham, M., *Youth Empowerment: A Training Guide*. National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc., June, 1982.

\*Available from the Institute for Responsive Education, 605 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Telephone: (617)353-3309.

# WE MADE A DIFFERENCE



**NASSAU COUNTY**  
**THOMAS S. GULOTTA**  
County Executive

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Joseph N. Mondello, Town of Hempstead  
Presiding Supervisor

Gregory P. Peterson, Town of Hempstead Supervisor

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Bruce Nyman, City of Long Beach Supervisor