

Greater Alabama Council

Youth Leadership Development Program

Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP)

Purpose:

The Youth Leadership Development Program, (YLDP) provides a leadership development program for juniors and seniors in high school chosen for their character rather than academic standing.

The basic tenet of the YLDP is that a person's character is more important than anything else in the ability to lead others and be a true leader.

History:

The YLDP was launched in September 2008 with seven high school partners, each selecting ten students to represent their high school in the YLDP. In November of 2008 Lawson State and Jefferson State Community Colleges became the first YLDP College/Operating Partners by providing volunteer leaders to assist in developing and administering the YLDP. Additionally, both Lawson State and Jefferson State provided coordinators (scholarship students) to work as facilitators for student groups and activities. Unprecedentedly, Lawson State President, Dr. Perry Ward and Jefferson State President, Dr. Judy Merritt committed two Presidential Scholarships each to the top students of "character" from the YLDP.

Colleges had for many years provided scholarships to students who had academic achievement and those who had athletic achievement, but never before to students who demonstrated the highest of character. These two special leaders, who themselves possessed the highest of character, broke new ground in higher education's goal to develop and provide the leaders of tomorrow for our society.

Wallace State Community College, Hanceville joined the YLDP as an Operating Partner in 2013 under the Leadership of President, Vicki Karolewics. This partnership allowed the YLDP to expand to three new counties, serving many more high schools the opportunity to participate in the YLDP. In addition to providing personnel and scholarships, Dr. Karolewics immediately brought a renewed energy to the YLDP, generating new ideas and direction to the YLDP.

Currently, the YLDP has 95 High School Partners that each chooses up to four seniors and two juniors to represent their high school, three College-Operating Partners, Lawson State, Wallace State, Jefferson State, and nineteen College Partners, in total providing nearly \$2 million in scholarship opportunities for students of character.

The Three Pillars:

Faith, Character, Patriotism

The YLDP is founded on three fundamental Pillars of leadership: Faith, Character, and Patriotism. The YLDP considers these Pillars vital to the successful development of tomorrow's leaders for the United States of America and the Great American Culture, as well as for our future leaders of business, industry, finance, state and local governments.

Faith: True leadership demands a belief in a higher power, God. It is as Augustine said, having Faith means "believe in a God, believe God, believe in God." The YLDP stresses that leaders may be educated, knowledgeable, and experienced, but for them to be wise they must possess Faith, by believing there is a far greater power than themselves.

Character: An individual's character is a conscious guide that is constructed upon morals, values, and virtues that a person holds sacred to living a "good" life. The YLDP introduces and emphasizes the importance of universal morals, which by their very nature are necessary for all individuals to have in a society, in order for that society to maintain its existence. These include but are not limited to: Respect for Human Life; Respect for Human Dignity; Courage; Loyalty; Honesty; Truthfulness; Compassion; Generosity; Justice. In addition to the universal morals, the YLDP clarifies and emphasizes five fundamental morals of the American Culture: Work Ethic; Perseverance; Cooperation; Constructive Self Criticism; Responsibility toward Family and Society.

Patriotism: Patriotism is love of and devotion to the United States of America. The YLDP focuses on concepts of democracy and liberty. The YLDP stresses the sanctity of freedom and its cost. Additionally, the YLDP promotes respect for veterans and active military and their families. The YLDP puts great emphasis on the Medal of Honor, and the greatest of American Heroes, Medal of Honor recipients.

Curriculum and Instruction:

The Three Pillars of the YLDP: Faith, Character, and Patriotism are the foundations of the YLDP Curriculum, and its instructional process and activities. Hence, the Curriculum is not limited to the monthly lessons and group discussions but is the “experiencing” of the YLDP.

Faith is up front in every meeting and activity as all meetings and activities are opened with a group prayer. These “prayers” provide a direct and reverent acknowledgment of a power higher than ourselves, God. It also allows students to experience community identity with the idea of having and expressing Faith.

Character is quite obviously the essence of the YLDP. Students know they have been chosen because of their demonstrated character in school. They also realize that if they excel in the YLDP, College Partners offer scholarships to them because of their demonstrated character in the YLDP. Therefore, to experience the YLDP is to come face to face with the meaning of character. To understand that character is not a nebulous term but is in fact how you live your life. The YLDP “experience” presents the true nature of character by introducing the students to the “universal morals,” and “essential morals” vital to having sound character. All YLDP lessons, activities, program service projects, and student created service projects are a constant and consistent experiencing of the meaning of character.

Patriotism is part and parcel of the entire experience of the YLDP. The “Pledge of Allegiance,” led by a student, is said at the opening of every meeting and performed in the traditional sense by all students. Whenever a YLDP Meeting or activity has the capability the “National Anthem” is played and traditional participation and respect is shown.

Patriotism, although a constant stream within the YLDP experience, is most emphasized during the first quarter of the year. At the initial meeting in September, the students are assigned to a “Company” named in honor of one of the YLDP’s special Medal of Honor recipients i.e. Thorsness, Adkins, Morris, Livingston, Rose, Donlon, Marm, and Beikirch. Assignments, lessons, and activities for October are directly related to patriotism, the Medal of Honor, veterans, “Green Berets,” and The Command Sergeant Major Bennie Adkins Foundation. The Pillar of Patriotism comes to total fruition in the YLDP in November with the its annual “Walk For Warriors” and the annual YLDP Patriotism Program. Both of which dramatically bring to life the true meaning of Patriotism through student involvement, honored guests, special presentations, and the celebration of freedom, its cost and those who protect our freedom.

Description & Process:

The YLDP is designed to assist students, who are chosen for their demonstrated character, in developing leadership skills. Because of the large number of YLDP High School Partners involved, the YLDP has great diversity within the student body. The YLDP has diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, economic background, and academic achievement. The YLDP is a model of and for tomorrow’s America, where diversity is treasured as one of its greatest resources.

The YLDP is a nine-month Program that begins in September and ends in May. It conducts monthly meetings that start at 4:30 p.m. and end no later than 7:30 p.m. Typically, students sign in upon arrival. Each monthly meeting has a special guest speaker for approximately 45 minutes, which includes questions and answers. This is followed by a student group lesson focusing on faith, character, and/or patriotism. Active student participation is a part of each lesson. Every meeting concludes with students coming together to discuss group ideas, conclusions, and opinions. Students sign out before leaving. The student groups are specifically designed to include all aspects of the diversity within the YLDP and are assigned for the entire year.

In addition to monthly meetings, the YLDP operates numerous, staff approved, student created and enacted service projects. YLDP participation projects are also available to students to assist community organizations e.g. The CSM Bennie Adkins Foundation, The American Village, and the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Whenever students plan a service project they are encouraged to focus on what morals are being experienced within the project, and also identify any aspect of the Pillars of Faith and/ or Patriotism as a part of the service experience.

A major component of the YLDP is its special relationship with its College Partners. These colleges actively support the belief that sound character is vital for leaders to possess. And that by supporting students of character they are helping to fulfill a major goal of higher education, preparing leaders of tomorrow. This support is shown by the scholarships they provide exclusively to the students of the YLDP. A very important component of the YLDP is to encourage students to be informed about different colleges, preferably of different sizes in order to be certain of

where they believe they will be most successful, both academically and socially. The YLDP conducts two College Fairs in the first quarter of the year, which are only available to YLDP students, parents, and College Partners. The YLDP encourages students, and parents to arrange college visits to our YLDP College Partners. The YLDP encourages all of our students to attend YLDP College Partners. Preference in the selection of students chosen for the YLDP must be given to those interested in attending college at one of our college partners, students who are undecided on the college they want to attend, or students who want to attend one of the military academies. The YLDP does encourage students to attend YLDP College Partners because the colleges have demonstrated their support for students of character.

The YLDP evaluation process is based on a point system, which is given to both students, and parents at Orientation. All YLDP students should understand that future success in the YLDP is entirely in their hands. All students begin equally and are informed that points are earned exclusively by active participation in the YLDP. In March qualified students can select up to three colleges, in order of preference, that they want to compete for scholarships to attend. Scholarship recipients are determined by the highest YLDP point totals. Through the experience of the fair and equal competition of the YLDP, students experience the joy found in having and successfully completing responsibility, an understanding of the work ethic needed to successfully compete, and experience the rewards earned for dedication, determination, and hard work. Whether students have earned one of the many YLDP scholarships or not, the YLDP provides many valuable and rewarding lessons and experiences that help prepare students for the next phase of their lives.

The YLDP is a special experience for students that assists in heightening awareness of the belief: "This nation will remain free only so long as it is the home of the brave." And an understanding that "the greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of faith and character." In essence the YLDP is an experiencing of the rightful "social inheritance" of every American child, to have faith, be given a moral foundation for good character and a patriotic passion of the United States of America.

The Youth Leadership Development Program is enacted through the fundamental support of twenty-two higher education partners.

Youth Leadership Development Program Higher Education Partners

- Lawson State Community College – Dr. Perry Ward, President
- Wallace State Community College – Dr. Vicki P. Karolewics, President
- Jefferson State Community College – Dr. Keith Brown, Interim President
- Beville State Community College – Dr. Kim Ennis, President
- University of Montevallo - Dr. John W. Stewart, III, President
- Auburn University – Dr. Jay Gogue, President
- UAB – Dr. Ray L. Watts, President
- Jacksonville State University – Dr. John M. Beehler, President
- University of West Alabama – Dr. Ken Tucker, President
- Troy University – Dr. Jack Hawkins, Jr., Chancellor
- The University of Alabama – Dr. Stuart R. Bell, President
- University of North Alabama – Dr. Ken Kitts, President
- Auburn University Montgomery – Dr. Carl Stockton, Chancellor
- Stillman College – Dr. Cynthia Warrick, President
- Shelton State Community College – Dr. William Ashley, President
- University of South Alabama – Dr. Tony Waldrop, President
- Mississippi State University – Dr. Mark E Kennum, President
- Alabama A & M University – Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., President
- Talladega College – Dr. Billy C Hawkins, President
- Huntingdon College – Mr. J. Cameron West, President
- The University of Iowa – Mr. Bruce Harreld, President
- Alabama State University – Dr. Quinton T Ross, Jr., President

Thanks to our consortium of community partners the Youth Leadership Development Program provides each select participant with the opportunity to enhance his/her already identified leadership abilities and take hold of his/her future. Leadership like respect is earned not given!

Youth Leadership Development Program Corporate and Individual Partners

- Wood Fruitticher Grocery – Mr. Dave Wood, II, CEO
- The VON Corporation – Mr. Fred von Herrmann, CEO
- Andrew's Sports Medicine
- Waldrep, Stewart and Kendrick – Charlie Waldrep, Attorney
- CSM Bennie Adkins Foundation
- The American Village

Participating School Systems and High Schools

- **Alabaster City School System – Dr. Wayne Vickers, Superintendent**
 - Thompson High School
- **Bessemer City School System – Dr. Keith Allen Stewart, Superintendent**
 - Bessemer City High School
- **Birmingham City School System – Dr. Lisa Nicole Herring, Superintendent**
 - George W Carver High School
 - Huffman High School
 - P D Jackson-Olin High School
 - A H Parker High School
 - Ramsay High School
 - Wenonah High School
 - Woodlawn High School
- **Blount County School System – Mr. Rodney P Green, Superintendent**
 - Appalachian High School
 - Cleveland High School
 - Hayden High School
 - J. B. Pennington High School
 - Locust Fork High School
 - Southeastern School Susan Moore High School
- **Cullman City School System– Dr. Susan Patterson, Superintendent**
 - Cullman High School
- **Cullman County School System – Mr. Shane Barnette, Superintendent**
 - Cold Springs High School
 - Fairview High School
 - Good Hope High School
 - Hanceville High School
 - Holly Pond High School
 - Vinemont High School
 - West Point High School
- **Decatur City School System – Dr. Michael Douglas, Superintendent**
 - Austin High School
 - Decatur High School
- **Fairfield City School System– Mr. Walter Curry, Superintendent**
 - Fairfield High School
- **Hartselle City School System – Dr. Danna Jones, Superintendent**
 - Hartselle High School
- **Hoover City School System – Dr. Kathy Lynn Murphy, Superintendent**
 - Hoover High School
 - Spain Park High School
- **Homewood City School System – Dr. Bill Cleveland, Superintendent**
 - Homewood High School
- **Jasper City School System – Dr. Ann Jackson, Superintendent**
 - Jasper High School
- **Jefferson County School System – Dr. Warren Pouncey, Superintendent**
 - Clay-Chalkville High School
 - Corner High School
 - Center Point High School
 - Fultondale High School
 - Gardendale High School
 - Hueytown High School
 - McAdory High School
 - Minor High School
 - Mortimer Jordan High School
 - Oak Grove High School
 - Pinson Valley High School
 - Pleasant Grove High School
 - Shades Valley High School
 - Jefferson County IBS

- **Leeds City School System – Mr. John Moore, Superintendent**
 - Leeds High School
- **Midfield City School System – Mrs. Demica G. Sanders, Superintendent**
 - Midfield High School
- **Mountain Brook School System – Dr. Richard Barlow, Superintendent**
 - Mountain Brook High School
- **Oneonta City School System– Mr. Daniel Smith, Superintendent**
 - Oneonta High School
- **Pelham City School System –Dr. Alan Coefield, Superintendent**
 - Pelham High School
- **Pell City School System – Dr. Michael Barber, Superintendent**
 - Pell City High School
- **Shelby County School System – Mr. Randy Fuller, Superintendent**
 - Calera High School
 - Chelsea High School
 - Montevallo High School
 - Oak Mountain High School
 - Helena High School
 - Shelby County School of Technology
 - Shelby County High School
 - Vincent High School
- **Saint Clair County School System – Mr. Mike Howard, Superintendent**
 - Ashville High School
 - Moody High School
 - Ragland High School
 - Springville High School
 - St. Clair County High School
- **Tarrant City School System– Dr. Shelly Mize, Superintendent**
 - Tarrant High School
- **Trussville City School System – Dr. Pattie Neill, Superintendent**
 - Hewitt-Trussville High School
- **Vestavia Hills City School System – Dr. Michael Freeman, Superintendent**
 - Vestavia Hills High School
- **Walker County School System – Dr. Joel Hagood, Superintendent**
 - Curry High School
- Briarwood Christian School
- Bessemer Academy
- Cornerstone High School
- Evangel Christian School
- Victory Christian School
- **Catholic Diocese of Birmingham – Parochial Schools, Rev. Robert J. Baker**
 - John Carroll High School
 - Holy Family High School

Advisory Committee

Chairperson

- Mr. Dave Wood, Ret. Past CEO Wood Fruitticher Grocery

Committee Members

- Ms. Cynthia Anthony, Vice President, Lawson State Community College
- Dr. Rick Barth, Assistant Provost, University of Alabama
- Dr. Stoney Beavers, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator, Blount County Schools
- Dr. Sharon Bell, Ret., Assistant Superintendent of Birmingham City Schools
- Dr. Courtney Bentley, Dean of Education, University of Montevallo
- Ms. Mary Ann Blake, Treasurer, CSM Bennie Adkins Foundation
- Justice Mike Bolin, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Alabama
- Major General Dave Burford, Fleet Governance & Oversight, Southern Nuclear
- Dr. Phil Hammonds, Retired, Superintendent, Jefferson County schools
- Mr. Robert Holmes, Ret. Past Vice-President Alabama Power Company
- Ms. Liz Huntley, Lawyer, Lightfoot, Franklin and White, Author, Trustee of Auburn University
- Mr. Arthur Payne, Ret. Alabama State Legislator

- Mr. Tyler Peterson, UAB, Executive Director Admissions & Financial Assistance
- Ms. Velda Rooker, Interim Dean, Enrollment Services, Auburn University
- Mrs. Janice Rogers, News Anchor, WBRC Fox 6 News
- Mr. Dwight Satterfield, Supervisor of Operations and School Safety, Decatur City Schools
- Dr. Carl Stockton, Auburn University Montgomery, Chancellor
- Mrs. Betty von Herrman
- Mr. Tom Walker, Founder, American Village
- Ms. Lisa Warren, CEO, Andrew's Sports Medicine
- Mr. Vic Wilson, Executive Director, CLAS, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools
- Mr. Jack Wood, Executive Director, Alabama High School Football Coaches Association
- Dr. Odessa Woolfolk, Board of Directors, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
- Mrs. Lyn Stuart, Alabama Ethics Commission
- Louise Wood, Retired Teacher
- Mr. Tony Huntley, History Teacher
- Mrs. Cindy Bailey, Director of Guidance, Jefferson County
- Mrs. Mary Slaughter, Director of Guidance, Walker County
- Dr. Anna Vacca, Assistant Superintendent, Jefferson County
- Mrs. Clarrisa Reese, Director of Guidance, Birmingham City

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To learn more about the YLDP, please visit www.alyldp.com