



YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT ARE YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS (Y-AP)?

YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP IS THE PRACTICE OF ENGAGING YOUTH IN MAJOR DECISIONS AND SHARED ACTION IN PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES. Y-AP IS ABOUT GROUPS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS WORKING TOGETHER. WORKING TOGETHER MEANS THERE IS AN ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES AND A DIVISION OF LABOR THAT IS NOT DETERMINED BY AGE BUT INSTEAD IS SHARED ON THE BASIS OF THE INTERESTS, MOTIVATIONS, AND ABILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

ANOTHER KEY PART OF Y-AP IS THAT THE YOUTH AND ADULTS ARE WORKING ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. IT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE THAT SUSTAINS PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITY. ALSO, PEOPLE ARE GIVEN CHOICES AND OPTIONS IN HOW THEY WISH TO PARTICIPATE. THIS, TOO, IS NECESSARY FOR SUSTAINED INVOLVEMENT.

PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, Y-APS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MUTUAL LEARNING AND RESPECT AMONG YOUTH AND ADULTS. Y-AP IS NOT YOUTH-DRIVEN AND IT IS NOT ADULT-DRIVEN. IT IS A PARTNERSHIP, IT IS DRIVEN BY THE GROUP.

WITH Y-AP THERE IS TIME TO SHARE IDEAS, EXPERIENCE, AND PERSPECTIVE. IT IS THE SHARING THAT IS IMPORTANT. WHEN YOUTH AND ADULTS START TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND START TO BRAINSTORM, THEN SYNERGY OCCURS. IT IS THIS SYNERGY THAT LEADS TO AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIPS AMONG THE YOUNGER AND THE OLDER. AND, IT IS THE AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT LEAD TO POSITIVE CHANGE.

Y-AP IS ABOUT COLLECTIVE DECISION MAKING AND COLLECTIVE ACTION. THE POWER COMES FROM THE INTERCHANGE OF IDEAS AMONG MULTIPLE PEOPLE OF DIVERSE AGE AND INTEREST.

Y-AP IS ABOUT MUTUAL RESPECT AND SHARING. IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHALLENGE THE GROUP TO DEFINE RESPECT AND SHARING, AND TO SET GROUND RULES FOR HOW THEY WISH TO WORK.

SMALL SUCCESSES ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE MOST PARTICIPANTS HAVE NOT WORKED WITH PEOPLE OF ANOTHER AGE. JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY COMES WITH SUBTLE STEREOTYPES ABOUT THOSE YOUNGER OR OLDER THEN THEMSELVES. SMALL SUCCESSES HELP PARTICIPANTS MOVE PAST THESE STEREOTYPES.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS?

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS...

ARE BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS WORKING ON THE SERVICE PROJECT?

ARE INDIVIDUALS WORKING ON THE PART OF THE PROJECT THAT INTERESTS THEM?

IS THE SERVICE PROJECT IMPORTANT?

ARE BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

DO THE YOUTH AND ADULTS RESPECT EACH OTHER AND THEIR IDEAS?

IS TIME MADE AVAILABLE TO SHARE IDEAS?

ARE THERE CLEAR ROLES? DO PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED?

ARE PEOPLE GIVEN AMPLE TIME AND COACHING IN ORDER TO MEET EXPECTATIONS?

THE VALUE OF Youth Adult Partnerships

WE WANT TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACTIVE LEARNING, IN NEW ROLES, AND IN NEW RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE IT IS GOOD FOR THEM. IT HELPS THEM GET SKILLS, BUILD CONFIDENCE, AND FEEL A SENSE OF CONNECTION.

YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS ARE AN ISSUE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. IN A CIVIL SOCIETY, EVERYBODY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY AND EVERYBODY IS NEEDED. IN A CIVIL SOCIETY, YOUTH ARE NOT SEGREGATED AND ISOLATED FROM ADULTS IN DAY TO DAY COMMUNITY LIFE AND DECISION MAKING. YOUTH HAVE VALUABLE INSIGHTS THAT NEED TO BE BROUGHT TO THE TABLE.

YOUTH HAVE A RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE. YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO COMMENT ON ALL MATTERS IMPACTING THEIR OWN LIVES AND THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

Y-AP PROMOTES YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, A SENSE OF EFFICACY AND A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE, AND A RANGE OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES. YOUTH START TO FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. Y-AP HELPS TO PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

ADULTS INVOLVED IN Y-AP ALSO DEVELOP A GREATER SENSE OF COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE. THEY GET BETTER IN THEIR ROLES, AND GET MORE IN TOUCH WITH THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE. WHEN INVOLVED IN Y-AP, STEREOTYPES AND ATTITUDES ABOUT YOUTH SHIFT FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE.

Source: There are many people – staff, volunteers, community leaders, community partnerships – that want to partner with young people, but don't know how to get started. Notes from this page are taken from and narrated on this PowerPoint for those persons. <http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/2011/07/13/jump-start-y-ap-with-this-narrated-powerpoint/> by Shepherd Zeldin and Julie Petrokubi



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