



March 2012 VYAC Conference Information Packet

Conference Focus

The March VYAC conference continues the focused approach by Project LIFE to provide statewide conferences on specified topics. This conference will be focused on leadership, advocacy and independent living skills.

This conference will provide an integrated, comprehensive shift towards providing youth across the state with the knowledge and skills they need to become stronger leaders, advocates and citizens in their community.

Conference Goals

1. Youth will learn how to create future goals to enhance productive citizenship.
2. Youth will learn the basic concepts of leadership development and understand what it means to be a leader.
3. Youth will become confident in their ability to grow into community leaders.
4. Youth will learn how to cultivate and develop their own empowerment assets.

Eligibility

Youth interested in attending must meet the following requirements:

1. Between the ages of 14-21;
2. Currently in foster care or adopted after the age of 16;
3. Interest in advocacy;
4. Interest in leadership opportunities;

Youth who meet the criteria should submit a conference application with the assistance of their DSS worker. Applications will be reviewed by Project LIFE staff and youth will be accepted to the conference based on demonstrated interest in the conference focus and goals.

Conference Site Information

The conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotels Virginia Beach.

Attendees will stay in rooms and **should expect to share a room and bathroom with 1 other youth of the same gender**. Many of the conference activities will occur indoors. Attendees should be prepared to spend several hours at a time indoors. Attendees are encouraged to bring appropriate swimwear, as there is an indoor pool to use.

Workers and youth are encouraged to visit the hotel website for more information: <http://www.cpvabeach>.

Steps for Applying

1. The DSS worker will assess a youth's eligibility and level of interest prior to contacting the youth.
2. The DSS worker will explain the conference focus and expectations to the youth. If the youth continues to show interest, he/she will be provided with an application by his/her DSS worker. **It is expected that the youth will complete the application, with assistance from an adult supporter only as necessary.**
3. The completed application will be returned to the DSS worker, who will sign off on the application and submit to Project LIFE.
4. The youth and their DSS worker will be contacted by Project LIFE staff when the conference application has been reviewed and a decision has been made. A youth must be accepted in order to attend the conference.
5. Once the youth has been accepted, the DSS worker will be sent a registration form to be completed for the youth. **A registration form must be submitted for the youth's application process to be considered complete.**

Registration Deadline & Wait List

60 youth will be accepted to the March conference, with the goal of 12 youth representatives for each of the five regions. Applications will be reviewed and a decision will be made based on the order in which they are received according to region. Youth and workers are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible. Youth who apply from a region that has reached capacity will be put on a waitlist. **After February 7, any remaining openings will be filled by waitlisted individuals regardless of regional representation.**

Please direct any questions to Talia Knezic, Project Coordinator, at tknezic@umfs.org or (804) 239-1044.

You may also contact your Project LIFE Regional IL Consultant:

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