

YLF NEWS

Aug
2013

Congratulations



Tenth Annual YLF graduated 17 from across Oklahoma!

Seventeen rising high school juniors and seniors were selected for the 10th Oklahoma Youth Leadership Forum! This year's delegates discussed ways to better lead and advocate for themselves and others, role played through a mock IEP meeting, debated and voted on the issue of a new accessibility logo (which passed the YLF congress), made it through several team building activities, learned about disability history and much more. The photo above shows the 2013 Graduating Class and Alumni Mentors! So, without further ado, let me introduce you to this year's class of fabulous leaders (along with their Name Game nickname)!

Front row: *Magnificent Morgan Davis, Jamming Jake Pyle, Garret Go Go Offenburger, Awesome Austin Hall, Gwynzilla Gwyn Weathers, Kissy Kasey Davis, and Sir Steven the Stargazer Butner.*

Back row: *Alive Alexander Johnson, Amazing Allysa Trevino, PE Porsha Ellis, Vivacious Vincent Romano, Big Ben Jewell, Tie-a-Knot Trey Bartlett, Foiling Phlycia Lewis, Joe Jerran Amos, Lucky Logan Branham, Skinny Shane Hokett, Wild Weston Jenkins, Trevin Lawson, Meagan Fick, Cody the Creator Parrick, Kite Karissa DeLaCruz, Zippo Zak Duplan, Hilarious Hennessey Wallace and Respectful Railee Creech.*

Congratulations!

OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENTAL

ODDC
DISABILITIES COUNCIL

How Advocacy Happens

Saving Yearbook: Taking Action When My Favorite Class Was Threatened by B. Lee

In the first 16 years of my life, I was never an involved student. I spent my first two years of high school simply showing up on time, doing my homework, and panicking over my finals. I knew nothing about the school's budget or administration, and I didn't spend much time getting to know my teachers. For me, it was enough to keep a B average, which sometimes meant not studying for a few months, then cramming for the test the night before. Despite waiting until the last minute to study, I was accepted into the school's Honor Society my junior year.

To get even more involved, I also signed up for the yearbook staff. Our school counts yearbook as a class, but a class where the students have more control than usual. As a junior, I shadowed the seniors, learned the ropes, and helped out here and there. Yearbook is, in many ways, a cult. You sign a contract promising you won't gossip and spread confidential information. The class is run like a business. Instead of lessons and tests, the final product—the yearbook itself—determines your grade.

The editors pick a theme that accurately represents the senior class. Then you get to work. We were supervised by the art teacher Ms. A. Ms. A's hands-off approach meant that the student editors were really in control of the yearbook. She tried to interfere as little as possible to encourage leadership among the students. She was informal and open with the kids and let the editors do what they wanted. We all liked working with her. Month after month, the staff clicked away at the computers, designing spreads, and editing copy, while photographers uploaded photos, and artists illustrated. Every page, every sentence and caption, was nitpicked. Between meeting deadlines, arguing with the editor over layouts, the editor growling at you, and trying to cram as many words as possible on a page, this class got very hectic.

By the spring term, we were done. The final product was a unified yearbook that chronicled the seniors' experiences, all the way back to freshman year, detailed with artwork and photography of the campus, the classrooms, and students.

The effort paid off when, for the second year in a row, our yearbook received a national award. I had designed a few pages, and helped raise funds by begging parents for money at parent-teacher conferences. It was nice to know I played a small role in winning that award. I was beginning to feel like my work was worthwhile and notable, and I looked forward to being in charge next year, my senior year.

Fight for Survival: Rumors were swirling that yearbook might be cut as a class altogether, right when it was our turn. Our principal wanted to direct more of the school's funding toward science research, and he was hinting that he'd cut yearbook to save money. If we couldn't recruit enough students for a full staff, the principal would surely cut yearbook. To find out if the rumors were true, the four juniors who would be editors next year visited the principal. It was uncomfortable in his office. We said our hellos, and mentioned that the yearbook got an award. Our principal folded his hands in front of him,

and a smile broke out on his face. “That’s great! You have big shoes to fill next year, don’t you?” “Yesssss,” my friend hissed. “About that...” There was an awkward pause, and our principal began chuckling. “Oh, so there’s a *reason* you’re here.” My friend explained to the principal. “We need you to promote the class or we won’t have a staff next year. We feel that you aren’t doing enough.”

He nodded at our cute little speech. “I understand. I understand,” he sighed. He says this a lot but he usually doesn’t understand. “Though I think you’re all capable enough to promote it on your own. But if you want, I can tell more students about it.” He didn’t keep his word to promote the class as only a dozen students out of the 100 juniors in our class had requested yearbook a week later. If more people didn’t sign up, the class would be cut.

Big Changes A Foot

In the final months of junior year, our school was undergoing *major* changes. In our small faculty, two veteran math teachers, the senior adviser, the swim coach, a vice principal, one of our two full-time English teachers, and both our guidance counselors had left, retired, or been laid off. Yearbook didn’t look too secure when there wasn’t even a guidance counselor to help us with college applications. Tension over the budget was spilling into class.

Wins and Losses

The pressure of having won the national award sent us into overdrive by late May. Because our yearbook flyers were mysteriously disappearing, we ended up pasting them all over the bathroom: in the stalls, on the mirrors, and all over the walls. “JUNIORS!” it exclaimed in bright red letters. “Your yearbook needs YOU!” Now when any junior was sitting on a toilet, they’d read our desperate plea.

Keeping Yearbook at this point seemed unlikely. The faculty was being sliced practically in half, students were getting no college advice, and budget cuts threatened the humanities department....but we succeeded. By the end of our flyer campaign, over 30 people had signed up for yearbook, enough for two staffs. About five students signed up for the principal’s college program. We were relieved.

When we reported that almost 40 people signed up for the yearbook class, he added, “I know! And you were *worried*.”

I’ve learned that making an effort can affect school policy. Students, teachers, and the principal are all affected by budget cuts and conflicting agendas. We needed yearbook, and the principal needed to save money. The popularity of the class, thanks to the students who signed up, made it a priority to keep.

Something to think about: If the author and friends chose to sit and say nothing, what class options would be available for the next year? Think about the students who would never have the opportunity to learn the skills learned in this class, if this group had stayed silent.

Where can you advocate for something or someone? Can you join an organization? Can you be the voice of others who may or may not, have a disability. You can make sure the organization thinks through issues that involve everyone (such as access to/from events).



SPEAK

YLF ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT & ACHIEVEMENT CARDS

“Blue Cards”

Congratulations to those alumni who have sent in blue cards! I really enjoy reading what you are doing in your community! You are making a difference! **For those of you who are active in your community, but have not sent in a blue card, please do so!**

Why should you fill out and send in your blue cards?

1. The Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC) spends **\$50,000** every year on the YLF. Your blue cards show the Council that the money they invest in **you** are well spent.
2. Many of you have expressed interest in returning to YLF as an alumni mentor. Your activities and accomplishments demonstrates your commitment to being a leader, showing your individual initiative and responsibility you have in your community. These are important character traits that our Alumni Mentors have. Your activities (along with an alumni application) helps determine our next summer's Alumni Mentors.
3. Each and every one of you do amazing things every day! If you don't send in your blue cards, we don't know what you're doing!

You can fill out a blue card by hand or online:

http://www.okddc.ok.gov/blue_card.html

Not sure what counts as a blue card? If you have a question about one, call or e-mail!

Along with your newsletter, alumni should receive a few blue cards like to one pictured to fill out by hand. If you need more, call Jen!

YLF ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT & ACHIEVEMENT CARD

Name Jen Randle Date 7/14/13 Name of Activity Project Outreach

What activity did you do? Went bowling with a kids so parents could have some time for themselves.

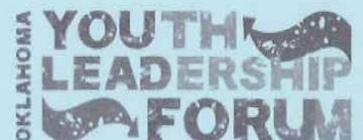
What did you learn? Respite is a valuable resource for families.

Location of activity Bowling Center, Norman

Length of time 3 hours

Supervisor or witness signature Danielle Broach

YLF alumni signature Jen Randle



Awesome Apps



Never forget to take your vitamins or medicines again - Let the **Nightengale** app remind you! It's available for FREE on both apple and android. (For those who are wondering why it's named Nightengale, search the internet for Florence Nightengale.



Keep track of your workout performance over time and connect with your friends! You can work out AND be social! **Runkeeper** is available for FREE on both apple and android.

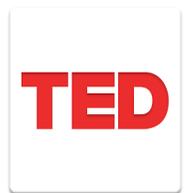


EyeNote

Identify denominations of paper currency with this really cool app! **EyeNote®** is available for FREE on apple devices. For android users, use the app called **IDEAL Currency Identifier**. It's FREE too!



IDEAL Currency



Listen to some of the world's most fascinating people on **TED**. Education radicals, tech geniuses, medical mavericks, business gurus, and music legends. Find more than 1500 TEDTalk videos and audios (with more added each week) on TED. This app is available for FREE on both apple and android.



Miss your friends from YLF? Get the **Hangouts** app on your apple or android phone and you can have one-on-one or group conversations ! You can even send photos and even have a video call...all for FREE!



Have trouble finding your way? Let **Waze**, the world's fastest-growing community-based traffic and navigation app, help you! Join other drivers in your area who share real-time traffic and road info, saving everyone time and gas money on their daily commute.

Kara's Jokes



Why couldn't the sailors play cards?

Because the captain was standing on the deck!

Want to hear a construction joke?

I'm still working on it.



Ask Terry



Hi everyone! It was an honor to meet many of you at the 2013 YLF, and it was great fun to work with you to explore some of the many topics related to human sexuality. For those of you I have not met, I'm Terry. I've been teaching people about sexuality for 30 years, and I am currently the director of education for Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma (PPCO) and an adjunct professor at OU.

At YLF 2013, we barely scratched the surface of all the questions and concerns that people expressed. To keep our conversation going, and to help you become "sexperts," Jen has invited me to write an article for each alumni newsletter. This is the first one!

We are going to start with the topic of **unplanned pregnancy**. Pregnancy can be a happy time in a couple's life – if they have good jobs, a stable home, the time and interest needed to be a good parent, and the maturity to be a responsible parent. On the other hand, pregnancy can be bad news if it is not a part of a couple's current plans. It can prevent them from reaching their education or career goals. It can change a relationship. It can be especially hard if one or both people in the relationship have a disability of some sort because it seems like everyone around them will have an opinion about it.

The first thing to know, and I'm sure that you do, is that the most basic way to prevent an unplanned pregnancy is to explore and express yourself and your affection in ways that don't involve vaginal intercourse. That's why many parents and teachers talk so much about abstinence – or not having sex in the first place. It may be easier for some people than for others, but it is true that not having sex will prevent pregnancy.

For people who share themselves through vaginal intercourse, pregnancy *doesn't* happen every time. In fact, when a couple uses an effective type of contraception or birth control, unplanned pregnancy does not happen very often. That's why some people call it "birth control" – not only do we have a lot of control over our actions, but we also have a lot of control over what happens because of our actions!

Some types of birth control are easier to use than others, and some do great things in addition to preventing unplanned pregnancy. Some have risks, and some are no trouble at all. It is important that couples plan together ahead of time so they don't feel rushed. Fortunately, there are plenty of people who can help you sort through all the information about birth control.

I could write about this all day, but I doubt if you would like to read about it all day. So, I am going to end this first article with three bits of advice.

To prevent unplanned pregnancy, you must learn the **TRUTH** about getting pregnant. If a male and a female have vaginal sex together:

- They CAN get pregnant the first time they have sex!
- They CAN get pregnant if they do it standing up, they do it sitting down, they do it with their clothes on, they do it in the swimming pool....
- They CAN get pregnant even if they have done it many times before without getting pregnant.
- They CAN get pregnant if they pee or wash out the vagina after sex.
- They CAN get pregnant whether or not the girl is on her period.
- All it takes is for sperm to get into the vagina. Vaginal intercourse is by far the most COMMON way, but not the only way.
- They can choose to NOT have vaginal intercourse at any point in your relationship, but they can STILL be prepared as long as they have condoms (and/or emergency contraception/EC) handy in case they change their minds.

Next, learn everything you can about the different birth control choices you have. Even if you don't plan on having sex for a long, long time, or ever, it is still important information to know so you can share it with people you know who might be at risk for an unplanned pregnancy. A great resource on the internet is www.bedsider.org. It is a fun, interactive site that can help answer all your questions.

And last, know that there are folks in your life who care about you, who respect your privacy, and who can help you find whatever services you need to stay healthy, happy, and safe from unplanned pregnancy.

Until next time, take care of yourselves!

Terry

If you have questions, the best way to get in touch with Terry is by email: terry.dennison@ppfa.org.

Throughout our newsletters you will find a lot of information to help you continue your advocacy (speaking up). Remember there are a lot more youth and young adults who don't have access to our newsletters (yet). Be responsible for helping them connect to information and resources that you know about!

YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AS WELL AS OTHERS!



A Healthier YOU



th Leadership Forum

Two of my goals for this year was to eat better and to just get moving more. These are goals that if I can make them work, I should reap many benefits from. For starters, if I eat better, I'll feel better mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Making these goals work is another story... There are loads of influences around that keep me from focusing on my goals. For example, potato chips are a big weakness for me. What makes it difficult is how readily available they are EVERYWHERE! I have to really be alert when I go on a "quick errand" to the store or else I'll find myself picking up a bag of Doritos for a snack! So... are you with me? Let's start our healthy eating plans together. Remember, if you don't take care of yourself, then how can we help others?

What...A healthy eating plan? What is that? A healthy eating plan gives your body the nutrients it needs every day while staying within your daily calorie goal for weight loss. A healthy eating plan also will lower your risk for heart disease and other health conditions. This type of plan should emphasize eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. This includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts and is also low in saturated fats, *trans* fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Cooking with Fara

Red, White and Blue No Bake Layered Dessert

Ingredients:

- 1 large pudding mix- vanilla- no cook kind
- 3 cups cold milk
- 1 package of Cool Whip
- 1 carton of strawberries
- 1 carton of blueberries

Directions: Follow directions on pudding mix (mix it with the cold milk with a whisk for 2 minutes and set aside) Wash and cut the strawberries into bite size pieces Wash the blueberries In a clear bowl, layer the strawberries and blueberries on bottom Then put a layer of pudding on top of them, then a layer of whipped cream. Start over with another layer of strawberries and blueberries, then pudding, then whipped cream until it is all gone.

Fara's note: You can add a few extra sprinkles on top to make it a little more festive. No matter what, have fun with it because you just can't go wrong with **tasty fruit** and delicious sweet layers!





Oklahoma High School Page Program

Each year, students from across the State have the opportunity take part in the Oklahoma House of Representatives High School Page Program. Pages are assigned for one week, Monday through Thursday, during the legislative session beginning the first Monday in February through the last Friday in May.

Pages begin their duties on Monday morning with an orientation session to become familiar with the Capitol building and their duties for the week. Other mornings, Pages will hear a guest speaker or attend a meeting. Each day begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Wednesday and 2:30 p.m. on Thursday. Serving as a Page includes working in the House Chamber each day during session, running errands for the Representatives and House staff and taking part in the House Page Mock Legislature.

The Page Program is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. For more information or to request an application to serve as a House of Representatives Page, contact your local State Representative's office by calling the Oklahoma House of Representatives at (405) 521-2711 or toll free at (800) 522-8502.

Not sure who your legislator is?
Find out here:

[http://www.okhouse.gov/
FindMyLegislator.aspx?
State=OK](http://www.okhouse.gov/FindMyLegislator.aspx?State=OK)

Just Do It!



Oklahoma Self-Advocacy Network (OKSAN)

OKSAN is a new organization that works to include people with different disabilities throughout Oklahoma. We are searching for adults with disabilities who are interested in meeting on a regular basis to discuss issues that face Oklahomans with disabilities and their families.

Currently, we meet monthly in Norman for about 2 hours (or so) each month. We have a strong organization already that is representative of people with cognitive disabilities and physical disabilities. Groups represented are Oklahoma People First, TBI Raiders, National Youth Leadership Network, Oklahoma Youth Leadership Forum, and Thunderbird Clubhouse. While these are named groups, no one has to be part of a "group" to become part of the Oklahoma Self-Advocacy Network. If you are interested in representing **YLF Alumni** and young adults, contact Brian Smith, Self-Advocacy Partners Coordinator: brian-smith@ouhsc.edu. Brian is a YLF Alumni too!

One of the major goals OKSAN is working on is hosting the 2014 National Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) Conference in Oklahoma City. Typically this conference has been for people with cognitive disabilities, but it is our hope to showcase OKSAN's membership as diverse beyond that diagnosis. We will be needing many volunteers for this event, so get ready to roll up your sleeves!

Another goal for OKSAN is to get rid of the "R" word. There are brochures and flyers that we can send to you to help spread the word on getting rid of the every day use of the "R" word.



Have you pledged to not use the "R" word? www.theRword.org

Happy Birthday

BEST WISHES TO THE BIRTHDAY FOLKS OUT THERE! HAVE A DAY FULL OF AWESOMENESS!

July Birthdays

Railee Creech
Bijan Ghassemi
Heather McCracken
Andy Conlon
Rosy McCann
Jerran Amos
Chase Miller
Joey Keller
Patrick "Pistol Pete" Lueker
Jennifer Baker
Lauren Allison
Briar Lostlen
Morgan Davis
Amanda Yuen
Shyenne Nicholas
Sarah Brown
Ellie Williams

August Birthdays

Rachael Crist
Kara Patterson
Justin Goldsberry
Michelle Oakley
Chad Beery
Jake Spencer
Hubie Graham
Tiffany Roe
Andria Lewis
Sarah Murrell
Aaron Bullock
Kay Heffron
Kethzia Martinez
Austin Rasor
Lauren Morrison

September Birthdays

Laura Frazier
Brittney Ducre
Jennifer Kauder
Asher Ward
Brad Mays
Steven Butner
Nikolas Mihelic
Caleb Mihelic
Brian Smith
Jacob Lindsey
Nakea Stovall
Anthony Taylor
Blake Evans
Duane Stephens
Ciara Murphy
Jon Hart
Holly Davis
Ann Trudgeon
Alejandra Saldana
Carly Barnes
Jamie Woolman
Dylan Kozar
Gwyn Weathers



Send a birthday card to your friends!

NEWSLETTER CONTEST!

Answer the following questions in an email or mail to have a chance at a \$10 gift card to iTunes.

1. What is your full zip code?
2. Who is the Governor of Oklahoma?
3. Who is the Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma?
4. Who is your State Representative?
5. Who is your State Senator?

Email or Mail your answers to:
jenifer.randle@okddc.ok.gov

or

Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council
Attention: YLF July Newsletter Contest
2401 NW 23rd Street, Suite 74
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

GOOD LUCK!

Advocacy Tips: How to Talk to Your Legislator



1. **Dress Nicely.** There is no need to dress fancy, just be sure that you are clean and presentable.
2. **Introduce Yourself.** Tell the legislator your name and where you live.
3. **Start with small talk.** If you know anything about the legislator or have heard them speak at other events, it is a great idea to mention this. Tell them what you liked about what they said. If you haven't heard them speak, don't worry about it, just be sure and thank them for taking the time to meet with you.
4. **Clearly and directly state the issue you want to discuss.** For example, "I want to talk to you about helping homeless youth by funding a housing trust fund". Only address one or two issues in a meeting.
5. **Know the facts about your issue.** Feel free to bring notes in with you. Legislators have many bills that they are looking at. They don't know as much about this bill as you do and they need you to provide information. If they ask a question you don't know the answer to, do not make up an answer!! Politely tell them you are unsure, but will find out and get back to them. Don't forget to get back to them!
6. **Share how this bill will affect you personally.** Facts and stats are great, but the most important thing you can do for legislators is educate them about how the bill affects real people. Let them know why you care about this bill and why they should care. Tell your story!
7. **Be a good listener.** After you make your pitch, allow the legislator to respond and listen respectfully.
8. **Tell your legislator what you want.** What do you want from your legislator? Do you want them to support and vote for the bill? Do you want the bill changed and if so, how? Do you want them to vote against the bill?
9. **Thank them for their time.** Again, it is so important to be polite and respectful. Be sure and thank them.
10. *It is a good idea to create a "summary page" to hand to your legislator. This gives you something to list your facts, statistics, and other important information regarding your issue as well as your contact information!*

Not sure who your legislator is? Find out here:

[http://www.okhouse.gov/
FindMyLegislator.aspx?
State=OK](http://www.okhouse.gov/FindMyLegislator.aspx?State=OK)

MY AMERICAN DREAM

VOICES OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

VIDEO CONTEST



**Share your dream
for a chance to win
\$1,000, a digital
tablet & a mentor
to guide you!**

WHAT IS THE CONTEST?

Share your American dream in National Disability Institute's 3rd Annual My American Dream – Voices of Americans with Disabilities Video Contest. Do you want to land your dream job? Own a home? Go to college? Start your own business? Share your goals and show America that people with disabilities want what everyone wants – a chance to live their American dreams. Be part of the conversation. Be part of the solution. Be part of advancing the economic empowerment and financial capability of people with disabilities.

HOW DO I ENTER THE CONTEST?

1. Create and submit a three-minute video (no longer) **by Sept. 10, 2013** that tells your story and shows the steps you plan to take or the steps you are taking toward your American Dream. Be serious. Be funny. Be creative. How you share your story is up to you. Take a look at previous finalists here: dream.realeconomicimpact.org. Some of these videos are simple. Some are fancy. **It's the story that matters.**
2. Upload your video to youtube. If you don't have a youtube account, we can upload it to the YLF account!
3. Email your video's URL, your full name and phone number to mydream@ndi-inc.org by Sept. 10, 2013. America will vote and select a winner from 5 finalists beginning on October 1, 2013.
4. Go to dream.realeconomicimpact.org/rules.html for all official rules!